

Australian

Wild

*bushwalking, skitouring
canoeing and climbing magazine*



Franklin River rafting

Cross country ski bases

Bushwalking the Red Centre,

Powelltown tramways,

Flinders Ranges

Canoeing the Nymboida

New Zealand's Mt Aspiring

Sleeping bag survey

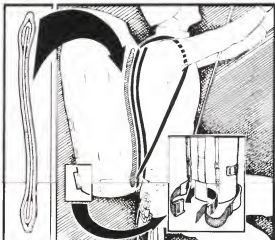
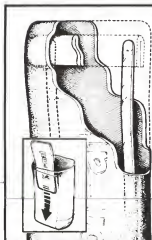
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Photo Fritz Balkau

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*bushwalking, skitouring
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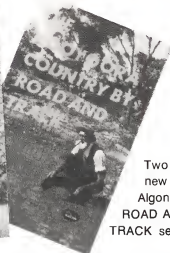
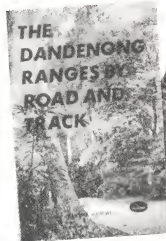


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The Franklin

Wilderness Lost?

● THAT READERS OF *WILD* ARE, IN general, implacably opposed to further 'development', in South-west Tasmania, and particularly of the Franklin River, is certain. Indeed this view is surely shared by most informed and independent people.

The Franklin is the heritage of all mankind, present and future. The river is unique, awe inspiring and irreplaceable. The intrinsic value of this wilderness is enormous. We should not place any man in a position of casting the die for its destruction. It is simply 'not on' for its future to be decided by a body as parochial and ephemeral as any government. This is not just a Tasmanian, or even Australian, dilemma.

The call to flood the (lower) Franklin is based on two assumptions: Tasmania needs the power (and the jobs) that the scheme will generate and that there are no viable alternative sources of this power.

Surely what is needed now, and urgently, is competent and independent enquiry, together with informed public discussion and comment, to determine whether additional power is *really* required. If it is, similar attention might be turned to finding viable, less destructive, alternative sources of energy. They can, and must, be found.

Australians, and wilderness lovers elsewhere, must consider the possibility of meeting Tasmania's needs in other ways. The preservation of the Franklin justifies the support and assistance of all Australians and their Government.

Price Hike

● THIS ISSUE, WHICH MARKS THE END OF our first year of publication, shows our first cover price increase. Readers will be all too aware of the effects of inflation, but some of the specific factors that have forced us to reluctantly increase the price are: a substantial increase in printers' charges effective from last February, an increase last December in postal charges for Registered Publications, the Government decision to impose sales tax on magazines, and a substantial growth in both the size and colour content of *Wild*.

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Chris Baxter
Editor and Publisher



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Wild Ideas

Clean Your Sleeping Bag!

● FOR MANY BUSHWALKERS AND OTHER outdoor people the purchase of that expensive down sleeping bag has proved a wise investment. With years of use it has kept you warm but recently seems to be less effective. The problem could be due to loss of down but your bag is more likely to just need a good cleaning.

Down clumps together and settles due to the accumulation of body oils and other dirt, and naturally its insulation properties are reduced. The aim of the cleaning process is to remove this **excess** dirt without removing the down's natural oils and greases. Removal of all the oils will destroy some of the insulating qualities of the down, so your bag should be treated gently.

Dry cleaning processes (in Australia) are generally harsh and can result in damage to the down filling; therefore they are not to be recommended. Hand washing is the most suitable method as it has minimal effect on the down. This is a rather tedious and involved process taking several days.

Fine summer weather is best but it can be done in any weather with the help of a large tumble dryer of the kind available at the local laundromat.

Choose your soap carefully. Harsh detergents are definitely out as they remove all the oils. A mild pure soap such as Velvet, Lux or Softly is suitable, but probably your best bet is a soap preparation like Fluffy which is specially designed for cleaning down products and available at most bushwalking shops.

To begin, fill a bathtub with ten centimetres of lukewarm water and dissolve the soap in it. Don't be tempted to use too much soap as all traces must be removed later. Lay the bag in the water and allow it to soak, gently patting the material to ensure that the entire bag is saturated. Very gently knead the bag, but do not on any account lift the bag out of the water. As the wet bag is very heavy any attempt to lift or pull the casing could tear the internal baffles or the stitching, producing an expensive messy write-off.

Leave the bag to soak for several hours to ensure that the soap

penetrates throughout the down, then let out the water, gently squeezing excess water out of the bag. Now for the rinsing process. Refill the bath with fresh lukewarm water, kneading the bag gently as before, then drain the water out. Repeat this procedure several times until all traces of soap have been removed.

Now you are ready to begin drying the bag. To begin with, squeeze out as much water as possible and carefully roll the bag into a clothes basket or large plastic bag. **Do not lift the bag** without supporting it. If you are fortunate enough to have a large spin dryer, this can be used to remove more water. The bag must be carefully placed in the spin dryer tub to avoid stressing any part of the cover. If you have no dryer available, the bag can be laid in an airy warm place to dry, such as a drying room or on a tin roof. Depending on the weather this can take up to several days, and it will be necessary to turn the bag frequently, kneading and shaking the down inside to break up the lumps and distribute the air evenly throughout.

Alternatively, a large commercial tumble dryer of the kind found in coin laundries will speed the drying process and save you the trouble of turning and kneading the bag. Use the lowest heat setting, regularly checking that the bag casing is not being overheated by the dryer. This will take anything up to two hours. Some people advocate placing a clean old tennis shoe in the dryer with the bag to aid the separation of the down but I have not found this necessary with large tumble dryers.

Your bag is now clean and dry, and to keep it in good order the following suggestions are offered. Store the bag by hanging it in a well aired, dry place in preference to leaving it in its stuff-sack. When compressing the bag into its stuff-sack don't roll or fold it, simply stuff it randomly into the sack (hence the name, stuff-sack). Always use an inner sheet when sleeping in your bag. These are easy to wash, protect the bag and provide some additional warmth. ●

John Chapman



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Wild Information

● **Climbing Meet.** A national rockclimbing meet is to be held over Easter at the well-known cliff, Frog Buttress, near Boonah in southern Queensland. All climbers and friends are welcome. For further details contact Bruce Stoff, 34 Regent Street, Wynnum North 4178.

● **Rogaining.** The second New South Wales 24-hour rogaine was held near Wingello in NSW's Southern Highlands late last year. (Rogaining is similar to a score event in orienteering, teams of two or more navigate round controls spread over a large area.)

The following report is by Bob Vincent who, with Laimonis Kavalieras, won the event in 23 hours 26 minutes, collecting all 50 controls.

'Laimonis and I prepared our maps with control sites, code number, points, out-of-bounds, and then joined up the controls in the order in which we would attempt them.

'In any score event you should find the hardest part and do that section first. With this in mind, we covered the controls in the very steep Bundanoon area first. We followed our schedule set by dividing the course into ten kilometre sections and calculating the estimated time of arrival for each section.

'With almost a quarter of the course completed by nightfall we began our night work with easy navigation, walking up hills and jogging down them, initially farmland, then undulating forest.

'Daylight broke at control number 40. As we approached the large Penrose State Forest we slowed the pace to a rhythmical walk as we knew we would get all the controls.

'The controls through the pines were easy by day, and we made full use of the roads (as always). More farmland and a large out-of-bounds area to avoid before our last section of seven close, low scoring controls. The next six kilometres were drawn out due to heat, thirst and fatigue.

'We finally made it. We covered 92 kilometres with 2,925 metres' climbing.' (See Club News.)

● **Blue Mountains Threat.** During the last quarter of 1981 the eastern escarpment of the Blue Mountains in New South Wales was threatened with further subdivision. While subdivisions exist at Lapstone, this escarpment (visible from Sydney and most of the surrounding Cumberland Plain) has had its forest cover left more or less intact. An application put before Penrith Council seeking to rezone land on the scarp from rural to residential threatened to change this situation.



Rogaining start. Gordon Shiels

Prompt action by nearby residents and conservation groups in forming a committee resulted in the application being withdrawn on the night it was to go before Council. Although this can only be regarded as a temporary victory (the application could easily be renewed) the committee is working to give permanent protection to this important area. One encouraging aspect of this campaign was the support given to the committee by a significant number of Council aldermen.

Keith Bell

● **Heard Island Expedition.** Sydney mountaineer William Blunt, in conjunction with the New Zealand Alpine Club, is organizing a multi-faceted expedition to Heard Island in the Indian Ocean.

Objectives include an ascent of Big Ben, the 2,743 metre ice-sheathed active volcano that dominates the island. The attempt will be made from the Spit Bay area by way of the Stephenson Glacier and the East Face. Scientific studies of vulcanology, biology and physiology will be carried out on the island and during the voyage. Photography and the production of a series of short documentary films on the island's character and history will keep the expedition busy.

Negotiations are well in hand for the charter of a large yacht to carry the expedition on the 13,000 kilometre round trip from Sydney via Perth. The expedition will take place in August to October 1982 or January to March 1983.

People interested in joining the expedition who feel they can contribute enthusiasm as well as skills in sailing, mountaineering, photography, radio communication or science are invited to apply in writing to William Blunt, Heard Island Expedition, Spectacle Island, Sydney.

● **Accident in Spring Creek.** Sue Bozwell was one of a party of five people from the Sydney-based Span Bushwalking Club abseiling the Spring Creek Canyon near Bungonia during November 1981. Spring Creek involves about nine or ten abseils.

An unusual accident occurred on the third-last abseil when the person abseiling called out that the rope might dislodge a loose stone. The people below got well out of the way and the rock was dislodged. It dropped 15 metres before ricocheting horizontally and striking the tree behind which Sue was sheltering. She was holding on to the tree to maintain balance, and the rock severed three of her fingers and part of a fourth.

According to party members, Sue's reaction was remarkable. After receiving first aid, she completed remaining abseils to the Shoalhaven River while other party members went for help. She was taken by helicopter to Sydney for microsurgery, but this was unfortunately unsuccessful.

Dave Noble

● **Climbing the Charts.** John Ewbank, the Sydney rockclimbing 'legend' of the 1960s who gave up climbing in order to become a professional musician despite having no background in music, recently released two songs which he had also written and produced.

● **Conservationists for Philippines.** The non-profit Sydney-based Australian wildlife and adventure travel organization AREA (Associated Research, Exploration & Aid) is to work in the Philippines to help develop a national park management system in one of the world's most exotic wilderness areas.

As a pilot scheme, a programme has been developed to construct a nature trail through the mountains of the island of Leyte. The island was selected.

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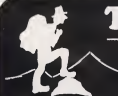
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because of its central position in the Philippines archipelago, the existence of two national parks which would be joined by the trail, and by the urgent need for a local industry.

The project is designed to establish a management system for Philippine national parks while making the Leyte area accessible to local and foreign visitors.

The Australian contingent of approximately 30 volunteers will work with 70 Filipinos on the 60 kilometre trail which should be completed within three weeks of the commencement date of 10 May, 1982. Those interested in the project should contact AREA, 363A Pitt Street, Sydney 2000.

● **Canioning Deaths.** Two women and a man drowned in Claustral Canyon in the Blue Mountains over the Australia Day Week-end.

According to reports, they were riding lidos down the creek when a flash flood raised the water level by more than a metre and swept them away.

This tragic accident only serves to underline the considerable dangers of canyoning, particularly in the event of flooding, which were emphasized in Dave Noble's article in our previous issue. The progress of this particularly experienced group was delayed by other parties. (A following party spent an uncomfortable night poised above a 15 metre waterfall.) Entering a congested canyon (or moving in large groups) is clearly hazardous.

● **Mapped.** Natmap reports that for the year 1980-81 they sold 370,780 maps, an increase of 8.2% over the previous year. They also report that they are printing the following 1:100,000 scale topographic maps which should be of interest to bushwalkers: 8625 Berridale, 8930 Katoomba, 8324 Bogong, 8123 Mansfield and 8122 Matlock. These maps will be available from normal retail outlets.

● **Expo.** The Victorian Department of Youth Sport and Recreation is organizing a free recreation and sporting exhibition in Melbourne's Alexandra Gardens on the morning of 4 April. Exhibitors will include bushwalking and other rucksack sports clubs and outdoor shops.

● **Elmore 'Eli' Backen.** In our previous issue we reported the death of Elmore Backen on Victoria's Mt Bogong last winter.

Two of his friends, Barry Woods and Mick Hull, have provided some background on his death and on Eli Backen himself.

Eli is believed to have died of exposure about a kilometre from the site of the Summit Hut on Mt Bogong on 24 September 1981. His body was found later that day by another party. There was 20 centimetres of snow on the ground, but it seems that this might



Kim Carrigan on the largest rock ceiling to be free climbed in Australia. Geoff Little

have fallen after he died because there was no snow beneath him and his gear had been carefully laid near his body. It seemed as though he had sat down for a rest and had been quickly overcome by hypothermia: the upper part of his body was warmly clad, but he was wearing shorts.

A memorial service was held for Eli on 6 December near the site of his death.

Barry Woods wrote of his friend: 'Eli was a wonderful walker, possessing tremendous stamina backed up by vast experience and knowledge of the mountains gained over a quarter of a century by almost continuous walking and frequent trips to the high country which he loved.'

● **Upper Goulburn Guide.** Victoria's Department of Crown Lands and Survey is releasing a series of recreational guides. The first of the series, for the Upper Goulburn region, is now available from the Publications and Information Office, Department of Crown Lands and Survey, 2 Treasury Place, Melbourne 2000.

● **Granite Mountain Expedition.** The Australian and New Zealand Scientific Exploring Society's Granite Mountain Expedition in far eastern Victoria reports that its scientific work has been the most successful and significant ever achieved by ANZSES. The main activities were in the fields of ornithology, entomology and historical archaeology on former gold mining areas in the region.

● **Roofing Country.** Traditionally rockclimbers have climbed large overhangs and rock ceilings by hanging in stirrups from man-made devices inserted in the rock. In recent years climbers have increasingly dispensed

with physical assistance from this equipment and have free climbed a number of previously 'aided' roofs. Perhaps the most spectacular of this form of modern climbing prowess is Kim Carrigan's (see interview *Wild 2*) recent free ascent, after several days effort, of the 20 metre ceiling Ogive in Victoria's Gramplains. Graded 28, it is possibly the hardest climb in Australia and almost certainly the biggest 'free' roof in the country and perhaps the world.

● **Buzz of Protest.** Wood-chipping in East Gippsland may not be all cut and dried.

Gippsland bee-keepers are up in arms over the Forests Commission's proposal to wood-chip large areas of prime honey producing forests.

The environmental impact study apparently neglected to take into consideration the livelihood of apiarists. Honey production is far greater from a mature tree than from an immature tree and almost non-existent from a eucalypt under 20-30 years old. Also, bees need pollen from other plants that are seriously depleted by clear felling.

The best type of forest for honey production is one with the correct balance of native plants.

It is likely that the Gippsland Apiarists Association will be taking the Victorian Government to court over its handling of wood-chipping in East Gippsland.

(Cross pollination by bees is estimated by the Department of Agriculture to be worth about \$300,000,000 a year to Australian agriculture.)

Ralph Barraclough

● **Wonnangatta Murder Mystery Solved?** Ever since these mysterious and unsolved murders in remote north-east Victoria were committed in 1917, countless bushwalkers and others have speculated as to the identity of the murderer(s) and motive(s). It has tradi-

tionally been felt that many locals knew rather more than they were prepared to admit, and that their ready explanation referring to 'cattle duffing' was a red herring.

A quaint little book, *Victoria's Forgotten Goldfield* by Bob Christie and Geoff Gray, published in 1981, throws considerably more light on the subject than has any previously published material. The authors examine two theories about the murders and point out that police investigations at the time centred around Dargo and Harry Smith. They claim that a family living in the Delatite valley would have had a motive for at least one of the murders but that no one in that area was seriously investigated, and they attempt to make this omission appear particularly significant.

• **Long Rivers.** Australian touring canoeists are invited to join the International Long River Canoeist Club by writing, enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope, to the Australian Branch Office at 2 Sandilands Street, Lockleys, South Australia 5032. The Association is an international postal association of canoeists interested in long distance touring and helps in the transmission between members of relevant information for such trips.

• **Conserving the Centre.** In early March a conference was held in Alice Springs 'to consider the optimum interrelation of tourism and heritage conservation, with particular reference to north Australia'. Whilst giving some attention to Aboriginal matters, it is not clear from the programme if the conference is not largely a public relations exercise for tourism in the area.

• **Wilderness Photos.** The Tasmanian Wilderness Society is conducting a photo competition, with sections for colour slides and black and white prints. The entry fee is one dollar a photo and entries should be mailed to reach the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, 129 Bathurst Street, Hobart 7000 before 31 March 1982.

• **Capping it Off.** The 300 metre East Face of Tasmania's Frenchmans Cap has long been regarded by Australian climbers as one of our most awesome walls. It was first climbed ten years ago, by a route that involved a good many pegs and other equipment for direct aid and is still unrepeatable.

A number of attempts to climb a great flake left of the original line have failed below half-height.

Last January Kim Carrigan and the remarkable American woman climber Evelyn Rees climbed this second route to seize one of the most significant new Australian routes of the last decade. With sustained difficulties (of up to grade 22) on sometimes loose or sparsely protected rock, the climb is a



Franklin River tributary, and right, leading Franklin campaigner, Bob Brown. Photos Stephen Spurling, and right, Brisbane Courier-Mail

serious one in an isolated setting. We expect to publish more information, including pictures from the ascent, in a future issue.

• **Federation Peak Death.** Last summer a young female bushwalker fell to her death near the foot of the very exposed summit climb while descending Federation Peak in the evening. This climb is usually damp and potentially very dangerous (see *Wildfire* in this issue); most people may consider it prudent to do it properly belayed with a climbing rope.

• **Army Paddlers.** 'Operation Olegas Truchanas', referred to in our previous issue, was not completed as planned



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because the Jane and Denison rivers had insufficient water for rafting. Instead a veritable flotilla of 21 rafts, in three parties, concentrated on rafting the Franklin. One group had to be rescued by a reconnaissance helicopter after it had been trapped by rising water and had lost various items including a raft and a radio. The other two groups managed to ride the lower Franklin in flood, negotiating standing waves of almost three metres at Double Falls.

A detailed photographic record was compiled and a book is being written on the exercise.

Ben Lans

● **Mining in Cradle Mountain National Park?** On 4 January 1910, Gustav Weindorfer stood on the summit of Cradle Mountain and said: 'This must be a national park for all time.' On 2 December 1981 the Premier of Tasmania announced that Cabinet would consider a proposal to allow mining exploration in Cradle Mountain National Park.

Such is the wheel of fortune in Tasmania. To most people it is difficult to comprehend why anyone would consider allowing mining within a National Park which has become the symbol to Australians of Tasmania's natural beauty. But Tasmania's politicians are not known for their commitment to Tasmania's natural heritage.

It has been reported that a mining company conducted an aerial survey over a section of the National Park apparently without going through the normal channels of approval. The company is said to have then pressured the Government to be granted permission to be allowed to conduct ground exploration. Upon hearing of this, the Tasmanian Wilderness Society called on the Premier for a full public explanation and an assurance that no mining exploration would be allowed in any of Tasmania's National Parks. The Premier refused both requests though he did confirm that Cabinet would be considering the

Irenabyss campsite on the Franklin. H Van Daalen



proposal.

In the State which allowed the flooding of the Lake Pedder National Park and the wood-chipping of a section of the Hartz Mountains National Park, it is not inconceivable that mining exploration in Cradle Mountain could be approved. Whether such plans become a reality depends on public reaction.

B B

● **Plans for Another Dam in the South-west.** Early last summer Tasmania's Hydro-Electric Commission began its investigations for yet another dam in the South-west, the Upper Gordon Scheme. The scheme would involve the construction of a dam in the Gordon Gorge which would flood the Vale of Rasselas which is the traditional access to the majestic Denison Range. This area is also within a pending exploration licence by a multi-national oil company.

B B

● **Helicopter Rescues.** Recent criticism of the cost to the Tasmanian taxpayer of airlifting an injured rafter from the Franklin River may be unjustified. A check with the local ambulance service confirmed that anyone covered by an ambulance subscription would be rescued free of charge, but not at the taxpayers' expense. Rescue by helicopter made no difference, provided it was authorised by a medical practitioner as the most satisfactory method of getting the patient to medical treatment. However, you are not covered if you call a helicopter or other transport on your own behalf; the request for help should go through the proper authorities. Subscriptions to ambulance services are Australia-wide and inexpensive.

Ralph Barraclough

● **Flooding the Franklin.** The first referendum held in Australia on a conservation issue, as predicted, has solved nothing. The referendum officially presented only two options: a dam in the South-west or a dam in the South-east. Despite the Government's exclusion of the 'no dams' option from the ballot paper (for fear that such an option might win?), the conservation movement ran the biggest and most expensive campaign in Australian conservation history. The aim was to convince the Tasmanian electorate, conservative at the best of times, to vote informally by writing 'no dams' across the ballot paper. The final tally saw the informal vote reach 45% (with the total 'no dams' 33% of all votes). The Gordon-above-Olga scheme, backed by a divided Government, attracted a paltry 8%, and the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme, backed by big business, the Liberal Party and the Legislative Council, attracted 48%.

The interpretation of the result, despite 'grand-standing' by the pro-flooding camp, is politically black and

white. For the present Government of Tasmania to proceed with the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme would be political suicide, but the alternative, aimed at appeasing the 'hydro lobby' and surviving politically, is to proceed with the King scheme and the Henty/Anthony scheme, both within the South-west Conservation area.



Against all reason, like lemmings into the sea and hard on the heels of the announcement by the Federal Government that South-west Tasmania has been nominated for World Heritage listing, the Tasmanian Government has scheduled this outrageous piece of vandalism to commence in 1985.

But one thing is certain. Even if it takes 12 years or more to build the dam, the Franklin will only be flooded contrary to the continuing strong and clearly expressed opposition of an increasingly large section of the Tasmanian, and Australian, people.

Bob Burton

● **Guiding Lights.** Professional mountain guides qualified by the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association (NZMGA) are now internationally recognized. More than seven years of effort by the NZMGA was rewarded on 8 November 1981 when the International Union of Mountain Guides Associations (UIAGM) voted to accept the New Zealand Association as one of only two non-European members. (The other is Canada.)

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• **Himalayan Solo.** Leading New Zealand mountaineer, Bill Denz, late last year made the first ascent, and solo, of 7,000 metre Mt Kusum Kang in the Himalayas by the 1,300 metre north-west buttress and summit ridge.

• **Mountain Lectures.** Austrian Reinhold Messner, generally recognized as the world's greatest mountaineer, when we went to press in February was to visit Australia later that month on a lecture tour. Messner's many significant ascents include the first ascent of Mt Everest without artificial oxygen (with Peter Habeler) and the first solo ascent of Mt Everest.

• **Trespass Remembered.** On 24 April hundreds of British 'ramblers' will set off from Hayfield in Derbyshire to climb the bleak moorland of Kinder Scout.

For many it will be 50 years to the day since they evaded police and fought with gamekeepers, trying to establish the right of access to the jealously guarded grouse moor.

Bernard Rothman, who was jailed for four months for his part in organizing the mass trespass, at 70 is now Chairman of the 50th Anniversary Committee and recently visited Australia to raise funds for the re-enactment of the trespass and other commemorative activities. He emphasizes the hard-fought battle to gain rights of access to wilderness areas.

Those wishing to donate to the Committee's appeal for funds should contact Alan Bond, Rock Mount, Moorlands Road, Birch Vale, Near Stockport, England.

• **Everest: the British Return.** After many unsuccessful pre-war attempts on the north (Chinese) side of Mt Everest the British are to return to that route later this year. The new expedition is to be a lightweight one led by the ubiquitous Chris Bonington who visited Australia after leading the first ascent of the South-west Face in 1975.

• **UK National Mountaineering Conference.** The British Mountaineering Council's annual conference at Buxton in northern England, which attracts climbers from many countries, is being held this year on 19 and 20 March.

The programme shows Australia as heading the list of countries whose climbing activities are to be discussed. An illustrated address on 'The Scene Down Under — Arapiles and the Rest' is to be given by Chris Baxter, Editor and Publisher of *Wild*. The Conference is to close with a lecture on 'My Life and Hard Times' by UK climber Don Whillans whose ample frame was to be seen with Colin Downer and a yogi on the Ganges in Greg Child's photo on page 34 of the summer issue of *Wild*.

A report on the Conference will appear in this magazine.

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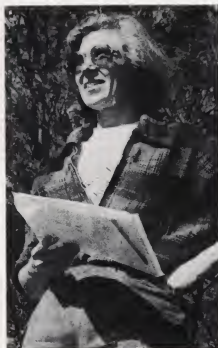
BOTH ☐

Contributors

Tom Andrews has been involved in orienteering since its beginning in Australia in 1969 when he organized the first event. He was a founding member of the Victorian Orienteering Association and the Orienteering Federation of Australia and has been the OFA's Promotion Officer since its formation. For the last seven years he has been almost totally committed to orienteering and works with the Orienteering Service of Australia. At the 1980 Congress of the International Orienteering Federation in Germany, Tom was appointed Chairman of its Development & Promotion Committee. As well as organizing Victorian and Australian Championships, he is organizer for the 1985 World Championships. He was manager and a team member of the Australian team to New Zealand in 1972 and 1974 and is a veteran of nearly 400 competitions in 18 countries.

Sandra Bardwell has gained a reputation mainly as a writer of descriptive track notes about popular walking areas in Victoria but she has extensive experience of the 'real' bushwalking areas of NSW, Tasmania and Victoria.

Sandra began walking as a member of Sydney Bushwalkers in 1962 and after moving to Melbourne 11 years ago, served a term as Secretary of the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs.



Since May 1977 *The Age* newspaper's Weekender supplement has included a regular bushwalking column by Sandra. She has had four books published during that time, two of them specifically about bushwalking.

During several recent visits, Sandra and her husband have explored much of England and Wales on foot; during 1981 she completed an extended solo walk of over 1,000 English miles. By way of complete contrast, the Macdonnell Ranges of Central Australia have seen the Bardwell footprints in recent months.

Dr Bardwell gained her PhD with a thesis on the history of National Parks in Victoria, and is Historian of the Victorian National Parks Service.

Peter Beer is a teacher, currently active in outdoor education, who has been a bushwalker for over 20 years, and a member and past president of the Adelaide Bushwalkers.

While the Flinders Ranges have occupied a great proportion of his walking experience, other areas of particular interest are the Grampians, South-west Tasmania, the Victorian Alps and the Snowy Mountains.

Interest in ornithology, native orchids and the wild places of the world has caused him to make visits to Asia, Europe and Africa in company with his wife, also a keen walker.

He has recently written a guide book on walking in the Flinders Ranges, called *Flinders Ranges Walks*, which is published by the Conservation Council of South Australia.

Tony Crichton began canoeing regularly in early 1981.

He prefers white water touring, especially in wilderness areas, and regards canoeing as an excellent means of traversing mountainous country. Some of the rivers that he has found rewarding include the Nymboida, Indi, Franklin, Mitta Mitta, Murrumbidgee, Turoos and Macquarie.

He hopes to investigate many more of the vast number of rivers draining the ranges of south-east Australia.

Bruce Heckinger was born in 1951 in New York and has spent the last ten years travelling, working and attending university. He graduated from Rutgers University in German and geography, then worked as school teacher and

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musician before coming to Australia in 1980.

While travelling round Australia he supported himself by busking (piano-accompaniment/voice), developing his act with such success that he was awarded second place in a national busking competition held at Lismore, NSW.

Bruce has recently combined busking with work for the Tasmanian Wilderness Society and would like to settle in Tasmania. This year he will attempt to walk and swim the entire length of the Franklin River.

Tom Miller, at 25 years of age, is an experienced bushwalker, skier and mountaineer. As a member of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club he has walked in the Victorian Alps and Tasmania, and has made a solo ascent of Federation Peak in South-west Tasmania.

Tom has had four seasons of alpine climbing in New Zealand and has many ascents to his credit, especially in the Mt Aspiring area where he has climbed Aspiring twice, and a number of other peaks.

During a visit to Europe he climbed and skied in the French Alps, and made a solo ascent of Mont Blanc. He is looking forward to participating in the 1982 Australian expedition to Nanda Devi, India's highest mountain.

Glenn Tempest arrived from England in 1966 and soon developed a strong interest in walking and caving. At 16 his attention turned to rockclimbing and then mountaineering.

Over the last three years he has climbed in eight different countries and established himself as one of Australia's leading young climbers. To support his 'lust for rock' he combines a variety of activities such as freelance photography, slide shows and work at Eastern Mountain Centre in Victoria.

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Franklin

tened River

Tasmanian river, alone.

● IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF Tasmania, at an altitude of nearly 1,500 metres, the Franklin River begins its southerly 125 kilometre journey through the largest of the world's remaining temperate rainforests. Over many millenia it has carved out a riverine wonderland of majestic might and fairytale beauty that, until recently, few people had seen in its entirety. It was only in 1956 that it was first successfully negotiated by kayak.

Since the first journey by rubber raft in 1976, however, the number of Australians and visitors who have experienced the Franklin has mushroomed. Many are seasoned river adventurers who have described the Franklin in lofty or even superlative terms. David Shore, a Californian, wrote: 'The Franklin had the aspect of rivers that have enchanted me in years of rafting. There were more waterfalls in side canyons than even New Guinea's Watut can offer, runnable rapids as continuous in places as Colorado's Tuolumne or Idaho's middlefork of the Salmon. When the Franklin ran at flood, it had the exhilarating power and speed of the Colorado!'

My own unforgettable Franklin experience began on a sunny afternoon last February. I hitch-hiked from Hobart to where the Hobart-Queenstown Highway crosses the Collingwood River, a tributary that gives access to the Franklin.

Once having been frustrated by my inability to roll a kayak at a Rutgers University (USA) pool session, my choice of craft was limited. I had purchased a second-hand four-man inflatable rubber raft for \$80 and borrowed or rented the remaining gear: helmet, life vest, twin-bladed paddle, lilo (fitted over the raft's non-inflatable bottom) and a waterproof barrel for storing sleeping bag, camera, maps, some clothes and whatever other essential-to-keep-dry items could be fitted in. Food and everything else was put into heavy-duty plastic bags and stored in a rucksack which, together with the barrel and paddle, was tied to the raft.

As I drifted round the first bend and out of sight of that last remnant of civilization, the Collingwood bridge, I felt both exuberance and anxiety, emotions which are surely common to anyone embarking on such an extended communion with nature. I was settling out, alone and inexperienced, on a beautiful but reputedly dangerous wild river.

Going it alone had not been my intention. But after a party of five folded, and knowing there had been an unprecedented number of rafters on the Franklin the previous summer, I was certain I'd eventually meet up with someone — surely before reaching the middle Franklin where there was the most ominous white water. As it turned

Rock Island Bend on the Franklin. Peter Dombrovskis

out, I saw no one for 11 days.

The first morning I woke on a rock-strewn bank at the junction of the Collingwood and Franklin. Progressively challenging rapids on the Collingwood had given me experience and confidence that helped overcome my doubts. I was now raring to launch myself into the middle of the river where the swiftest part of its flow would lead me to my first Franklin rapid and thence to many days of adventure.

I was soon enveloped in breathtaking Franklin splendour. Around a bend I swam into a deep and serene chasm bounded by nearly vertical metamorphic quartzite walls several metres high. The rock face, adorned with patches of exquisite moss, merged into steep slopes of rainforest. As I rested on a rock ledge, the only sounds were the trickle of small cascades falling into still waters and the occasional echoing cries of cockatoos and currawongs.

I saw no one
for 11 days.

The early morning mist had risen by the time I returned to the raft. A clear warm day was developing so I didn't bother with clothes. In fact, even during several days of intermittent light rain I rarely found it necessary to wear anything.

A short distance downstream I came to my first major fall — a one metre drop of frothing white water. This also necessitated the first 'scouting'. I left the raft safely anchored and walked along columns of horizontal rock strata to a suitable vantage point on the downstream side of the falls. From there I had to decide whether it would be safe to raft or if it would be wiser to portage. Inexperience made it difficult to make up my mind and I deliberated endlessly. I tried to imagine what I would look like coming over it; it appeared threatening one minute and innocuous the next.

I finally breathed deeply, rejoined the raft, donned life jacket and helmet and, with adrenalin seeming to flow as fast as the water, pushed off into the current. Sitting up on the stern, I had only seconds to jockey myself into the best position. My scouting had indicated a protruding branch that could spell trouble near the rocky wall on the fall's right side, so I lined myself leftward and, a split second before going over, sank down into an almost supine position on the lilo well inside the raft. When it was over, I went back and repeated the exercise so that fear would not detract from future enjoyment.

In the following days I became increasingly amazed at the changing scenes and moods of the river. The variety of rock types and formations

was especially impressive, and very soon I joyfully discovered that the combination of bedrock cliffs and deep water were suitable for solo rockclimbing and cliff diving.

Beginning on the second day and continuing for almost five, I followed the Franklin in its sweeping arch round one of Tasmania's classic peaks, Frenchmans Cap. For the first few kilometres, as its flow increased and its walls steepened, the Franklin became progressively more challenging. But self-confidence grew with experience and I was enjoying it all immensely — until my increasingly cocky ways almost caused disaster.

While negotiating one small but dicey rapid I sacrificed safety for manoeuvrability by sitting up on the rear of the raft. Suddenly a stick, protruding from a mid-stream boulder, threatened to tear my raft asunder. Without time to steer clear and oblivious of personal consequences, I used the oft-needed technique of parrying the boulder face with the rubber-tipped end of the paddle. The result was an instantaneous back somersault off my rear-end perch.

An underwater clash between head and rock caused complete disorientation upon surfacing. I looked upstream for a raft which I thought had disappeared because I didn't know upstream from downstream. Then my leap towards reunion was foiled by a sharp tug to the groin; after my backward flip I was still straddling the cord which fastened paddle to bow.

Eventually overcoming the situation, I continued in a more sombre mood — and more intent on finding companionship! I was also doubly appreciative of

Backward flowing water sucked me back into the fall.

the intoxicating contrast waiting for me around the next bend where I entered the Irenabyss, named from the Greek and meaning chasm of peace. Here the Franklin seems to come almost to a standstill, its waters dark, quiet and very deep. The beauty of the place is haunting, possibly intimidating to a claustrophobic because enchantment lies in its compact enclosure by walls that are sheer and overhung.

A significant component of Franklin charm is the myriad streams that flow or cascade into it, and one of the greatest joys is to follow these tributaries as far as possible upstream. As an unconventional route to the summit of Frenchmans Cap I chose one that I hoped would be part of a system which, according to my map, drained one of the small glaciated lakes just below the massif.



Although eventually defeated by the terrain, I felt jubilant in having immersed myself in a wilderness that, with its blend of rock, water and lush vegetation, resembled the Franklin in an ever-decreasing scale. It also provided something I had never experienced — it was possible that, for about 30 hours, I had walked where no modern man had walked before.

Two days later I began the section of the Franklin that is generally accepted as being not only the most stupendous but also the most frightening, the Great Ravine. This is a gorge 10 kilometres long that took me two awe-filled days to traverse. Four major rapids, all demanding full or partial portage, divide the gorge into five sounds, each as spectacular as Norway's Geiranger Fjord or New Zealand's Milford Sound. I could scarcely believe I had it all to myself!

My safe passage through the Great Ravine was largely due to a decision to buy safety with hard work. As Bob Brown, the most experienced Franklin rafter, had advised, 'When in doubt, portage'. I often wished for company for no other reason than that many rapids had the dichotomous appearance of being risky fun.

My only near catastrophe in the Great Ravine came when the pull of the river led me over one of a series of falls and smack into a merciless stopper where backward flowing surface water sucked me back into the fall, swamping the raft. Pushing off the fall with all the strength I could muster, I finally got into a weak downstream surface flow. Relief was overwhelming and I was thankful that I hadn't been forced into the only escape option — diving for deeper water.

The Great Ravine was followed by broad river country where the Franklin's beauty became less grandiose. There were lower banks with broad bends, and mountains were visible in the distance. Distinguishing features were limestone cliffs and caves, and white sandy beaches, good campsites, became more numerous.

Late in the tenth day I reached the Gordon River and that night slept on an

island at the T-intersection of Tasmania's two mightiest rivers. Feeling inclined towards romance and celebration, I forced myself out of a warm sleeping bag in the middle of a cold night, kissed the Franklin farewell with a sanctimonious last slurp, and boarded my raft for a moonlight cruise. I got back into my sleeping bag, grabbed the paddle and set off, but when halted by a few small boulders that required a little exertion and exposure to free the raft, went back to sleep. I woke at dawn to see rainforests whizzing by. My trusty steed had freed itself to seek out the Gordon's fast-flowing current. I had no idea how far I had come and was amazed that the raft had stayed with the current.

Macquarie Harbour, into which the Gordon empties its immense flow, is larger than Sydney Harbour but apart from Strahan, a picturesque fishing hamlet at its northern end, bears no lasting sign of civilization. A summer tourist launch leaves Strahan daily for a trip up the Gordon, and below the last rapid I was hauled aboard for the final lap in Macquarie Harbour. I leaned over the railing to gaze at an impressive mass of rock about 40 kilometres to the east — Frenchmans Cap. I had never seen it before and yet, having spent five days within the confines of its drainage basin, felt a great affinity with it and the river which drains its territory.

I reflected on those times when danger evoked self-condemnation for my foolhardy solo capacity, but I also thought of the times when I rejoiced in having it all to myself. I realized that the absolute solitude of my experience, like a monogamous relationship perhaps, was quite appropriate.

The Franklin is still threatened by those who believe that its natural power should be harnessed. I vowed to investigate. The more I learned, the more absurd, unfair and obscene it all became. ●

Above, a stretch of the middle Franklin with well-defined flood lines. Opposite, shooting a Franklin rapid. Photos Dombrovskis and Erik Westrup



● WHEN WE MET GRAHAM BISHOP, THE famous guide and author, he said that it didn't look like a natural line. He was quite right, but that didn't stop us making an abortive attempt on the only unclimbed face of Mt Aspiring. We were in search of glory and what better way to seek it? After months of talk and non-preparation we finally stormed off on our epoch-making attempt one fine morning in late February.

We arrived at the base of the North-

west Face after extensive photography and aimless wandering in a crevasse field. I magnanimously invited Wayne to lead the first pitch, so he shot up the rock like a stalagmite racing to meet a stalactite. Foul language floated down to me as I contentedly hung off my nice safe ice screw. Wayne was definitely in strife. He was fighting a losing battle with a vicious flaring crack, and the face above looked incredibly daunting. I lowered him off an unsafe sling. So

much for new routes.

We had been admiring the North Buttress for some time. This rarely repeated classic soars up beside the North-west Face. We thought we might try it and trotted down to its base. It was now getting on for 11 am, so we would have to climb quickly.

It was now my turn to lead, and as I clung in cowardly fashion to the supposedly easy slabs at the base of the buttress, I was wondering if we would



Aspiring to

An attempt at glory by Tom Miller on New Zealand's *Matterhorn* c

ever get up Aspiring. Wayne shot across beneath me and found an easier way so I followed his lead. At last we began to gain height.

The slabs were warm and sunny as the climb began to steepen. We started placing protection as we took alternating leads. Having left the initial easy slabs, the route began to bear absolutely no resemblance to the route description — a characteristic it maintained right to the top. Our vertical progress

continued with great layaway moves off flamboyant flake formations. Longer periods of breathtaking bridging followed. While the climbing wasn't monumentally difficult, it was time consuming.

We traversed right into the top of a normally snow-filled gully. The season of 1980-81 had been remarkably hot, so by this time there was very little snow left. Apparently this gully usually gives quick access to the top half of the climb. It

leads into a crack system and at the top of these cracks is the dominant feature of the climb — a large headwall. A traverse left or right seems impossible; the key to the climb is a crack that leads upwards and left, with the headwall looming ominously above.

Mt Aspiring's South Face, bounded by the South-west Ridge, centre, and the Coxcomb Ridge, right. The left skyline is the North-west Ridge. Glenn Tempest. Below left, Tom Miller. Wayne Maher. Right, Wayne Maher. Tom Miller



Greatness

he South.



Fortunately it was Wayne's turn to lead. He set off making good initial progress but his language began to deteriorate, a sure sign that he was having a spot of bother. Five minutes elapsed without the rope moving between my hands. Then a garbled shout, which I didn't understand, echoed down and finally he made the move.

I followed shortly afterwards, removing protection as I went. Due to overconfidence I nearly fell on one section with my body out of balance. I reached the crux section where Wayne had had trouble and my pack was awkwardly in the way as an overhang pushed me

I left small red smudges from hammered knuckles for Wayne to follow.

backwards. Wayne's protection was lousy, but longer legs and a tight top rope helped as I stepped delicately left. We were now on the left or east side of the buttress for the first time.

At three o'clock we stopped on a ledge for lunch. Our food consisted of smoked eel pate, Cabin bread and exotic cheeses, all chosen for their low nutritional value, high cost and appalling taste. Blackcurrant flavoured water was our beverage. I became acutely conscious of the weather, believing that some afternoon fine weather clouds were a forerunner of change. Fortunately they were not, but I was annoyed by Wayne's lack of interest in my paranoia. We finished our meal with chocolate and scroggin then continued upwards.

We now struck some atrocious rock for the first time on the route. Previously the rock had been of excellent quality — hard to believe in New Zealand — but for the next two rope lengths each foot placement sent a shower of stones down the mountain side. Finally it improved and we were moving well. A series of ledges led upwards and left. We followed them, which was possibly a mistake. The other possibility had been to keep close to the ridge crest. The exposure increased as we moved further out on to the North Face. The ledges were easy going but they tended to move outwards rather than upwards. We were getting worried as time was marching on and we hadn't even seen the top yet.

Eventually the ledges led into a broad gully complete with a cascading waterfall. The water was draining from the summit ice-cap which was now visible high above us. After a drink, and refilling our bottles, we continued up, climbing unroped to increase our speed.

It was a pleasure to climb unencumbered by the rope, but when we reached the bottom snow lead our confidence drained away as we felt the consistency of the snow — rock-hard ice covered by five centimetres of loose crystals. I opted for more rock while Wayne donned his crampons.

When Wayne emerged from a snow gully looking harassed, I also put on my climbing irons. We continued on together and reached the ridge crest. We were now on the final section of the Coxcombe Ridge, just left of the North Buttress. We would have to turn the last rope length of the ridge on the steep South Face. The day was turning into a magical mystery tour with our upwards spiral touching on every side of the mountain.

We roped up again and it was now time to use my most recently acquired

Opposite, Wayne Maher low on Aspiring's North Buttress, and below, Tom Miller on the upper slabs. Photos Miller and Maher



piece of technological equipment — a Simond Chacal hammer-axe. On a previous climb it had twice pulled out of overhanging crud, much to my consternation. But the ice on the South Face should have been ideal — rock-hard and steep. I led out on the traverse remembering all the things told me about placing it. 'You don't have to swing it, just place it against the ice and it will stick'. I did just that. I tried everything, placed it gently, swung it vigorously, walloped it. All I succeeded in doing was send large dinner-plates of ice tinkling down the South Face. Fortunately my other axe went in with a hefty swing. My crab-like sideways movement gave place to upwards progress as I left small red smudges from hammered knuckles for Wayne to follow.

Reaching the summit arete, I started to chop a platform with my ice axe. Unfortunately I missed the snow and dealt my leg a mighty blow. Wayne led through to the summit and at the top we surveyed the wonderful view, particularly peaceful in the evening light. We didn't shake hands because it seemed inappropriate to celebrate until we were safely off the mountain. It was now 6 pm

and Wayne suddenly became shutter crazy; he had been remarkably self-controlled on the climb, but now all self-control was lost. His gentle clickings and whirrings provided background noises as I demolished the remnants of our food.

As I sat on rocks just beneath the summit I wondered why the north side of Aspiring had been almost totally ignored, particularly by Australians. Here are routes ideal for the rock fiend, with the possibility of extreme difficulties on sound rock in a beautiful situation. Is it because they prefer to fly in to a high hut on Cook and knock off a couple of quick routes? Let them have it! The trog up the Matukituki Valley, the grunt up French Ridge and the Quarterdeck, then the grind down the Bonar Glacier is all part of it for me.

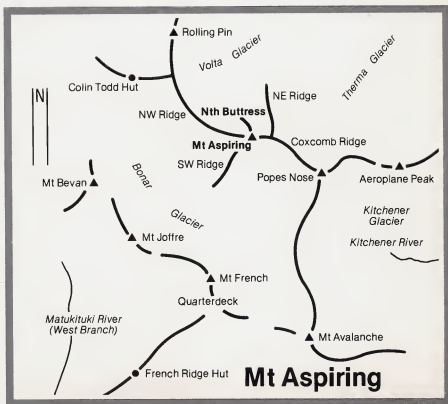
I also began to wonder how the guide book time for the first ascent was three-and-a-half hours. We took seven hours on the Buttress and the modern climber

is supposed to be better on rock than the lads of 1956. Perhaps we were just slow. Certainly I was inexperienced on big alpine rock routes. We could have saved time by using the rope less, but there were moments when we needed it as more than a security blanket. The conditions would have been very different 25 years ago, with long snow-filled gullies making for rapid travel, and the glacier has receded since then.

The descent proved to be an exercise in agony as our numbed brains refused to co-ordinate our tired bodies. Also, my toes got squashed down into the bottom of my boots. We had to follow the rock of the North-west Ridge all the way down because the usual snow ramps were non-existent. On the buttress in the fading light we became scared witless, and struggled to execute normally simple rock moves. In the near dark through the Gendarmes of the lower ridge we lost the route again, and insidious thoughts of death crept through each of us as we used the seats of our trousers for extra friction.

We eventually stumbled into Colin Todd Hut at 9 pm to have a short night's sleep before a hurried departure in an unsuccessful attempt to beat the bad weather. Tired and weary, we searched for the route off Bevan Col in a white-out. Finding the way in the fine rain and mist, we proceeded to have an epic with Wayne landing on his head in one slippery slide. Finally we reached the head of Matukituki Valley.

As we rested on the grass, relief flooded our tired bodies as we realized that we didn't have to worry about self-inflicted dangers any more. At least not until our next attempt at immortality. ●





Cunning Running

Tortoise Tom Andrews imparts some hare-beating wisdom on orienteering.

●VERY FEW OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES HAVE grown in popularity as fast as orienteering. It's been labelled 'cunning running', 'the thought sport' and, more appropriately, 'the hare and tortoise sport'. But to devotees who get hooked on it, orienteering is a sport of brains, skill and physical condition which involves finding one's way through unfamiliar terrain with the aid of a super-accurate map and a special orienteering compass.

It is like a car rally, but done on foot, the individual being the driver, navigator and power source. There is probably no other activity that teaches you how to use a compass, read a map and choose a suitable route, measure the distance you have to travel and how to find your way in terrain you have never seen before, as quickly as orienteering. It's an art that is easily acquired and becomes an invaluable asset in most outdoor and wilderness situations.

The length of an orienteering course varies from about two kilometres for beginners and the not-so-fit, to about 12 kilometres or more for experienced orienteers. Along each course there are usually anything between six and 20 checkpoints placed in the terrain by the organizers. These checkpoints consist of an orange/white nylon marker-sleeve measuring 30 centimetres by 30 centimetres. They can be seen from a distance of ten to 50 metres depending on the thickness of the vegetation in the area. The location of the checkpoints is also marked on the competitor's map. Participants in orienteering competitions leave the 'start' area at regular intervals (usually two minutes) and must find their way to the various checkpoints and finally back to the 'finish'. The person finishing with the shortest elapsed time is the winner.

But in orienteering, everyone really 'wins', for the greatest pleasure of the sport is the sheer joy of discovering the various checkpoints, finding out that, after all, you were correct in your navigational judgement.

In organized orienteering competitions it is not unusual to find up to 500 participants and everyone, apart from beginners, is free to choose whatever length course he or she feels like on the day. Beginners are advised to start in the easiest course until they become competent in map reading and compass

work. Normally this is achieved after about two events. From then on it's their fitness that will dictate which course they will attempt next. The most important thing to remember is that orienteering is not a gruelling marathon trek. Participants can treat orienteering as a race, a test of their navigational skill or simply a stroll in the bush with the aim of finding the checkpoints adding a further element of interest.

Orienteering is the perfect complement to any athletic pursuit.

As an activity, orienteering is a perfect complement to any athletic pursuit. It is an easy, painless method of staying fit or getting into shape if you're not. Compared with straight running or jogging, which have their boring moments, one's physical exertion in orienteering goes almost unnoticed by the preoccupation with finding the various checkpoints.

Orienteering can be enjoyed by either sex, young and old, fit and unfit. Because you make your own pace in orienteering, it is an ideal activity for the whole family to take part in as a group. Parents are often seen carrying babies in papoose packs on their backs.

The sport was invented in Sweden in 1919 and came to Australia in its current form only in 1969. Already there are thousands of regular orienteers throughout Australia and New Zealand. State associations exist in every Australian state and the ACT. State and National Championships in all age classes are held annually for those who practise the sport seriously. Top Australian orienteers travel overseas representing Australia at World Championships and other international competitions, such as the famous 'Swedish 5-Days' carnival, which attracts over 18,000 competitors — more than the total number of competitors in any Olympic Games! The 1985 World Championships awarded to Australia are a sign of Australia's advancement in orienteering.

Orienteering does not require expensive equipment or special gear. Old clothes and comfortable shoes are the

norm. A map case or plastic bag, to protect the map from disintegrating in the forest, and an orienteering compass are all that is needed. Even if you don't own an orienteering compass, you can hire one from the organizers at your first event. The map and compass are the only essential items needed in orienteering. A basic orienteering compass costs well under \$10 from camping or outdoor shops and, in addition to being a most important aid in the sport, can prove to be a very useful item on camping or hiking trips.

Orienteering competitions are organized by State Associations and affiliated clubs throughout Australia and New Zealand. These events are normally held on Sundays in State Forests or National Parks within one to two hours' drive from major cities. All events are open to the general public and beginners are most welcome to try this exhilarating activity.

If you are tempted to give orienteering a try, for the purpose of brushing up your map and compass work or purely for fitness or the love of the bush, the costs are not high. Whether it takes you 30 minutes or three hours to complete your first course, orienteering offers one of the best value-for-money sports. Your entry fee would be no more than \$2 and this would include a copy of a very detailed colour map that shows all tracks, boulders, cliffs, streams, bush density, mineshafts and of course contours. The scale of the map is usually 1:15,000. Expert advice for beginners is always provided by a group of instructors from the organizing club, who obviously were once raw beginners themselves.

If you are interested in trying orienteering by yourself, with friends or family, and would like information about coming events near where you live, contact the Orienteering Association in your state listed below:

ACT Orienteering Association, PO Box 412, Woden, 2606.
Orienteering Association of NSW, PO Box C163, Clarence Street, Sydney, 2000.

Queensland Orienteering Association, PO Box 114, North Brisbane, 4000.

Orienteering Association of SA, 19 Albert Street, Goodwood, 5034.

Orienteering Association of Tasmania, PO Box 339, Sandy Bay, 7005.

Victorian Orienteering Association, PO Box 16, Abbotsford, 3067.

Orienteering Association of WA, PO Box 234, Subiaco, 6008. ●

A pleasant and exciting way to stay in shape in bush surroundings, and inset, champion orienteer Sue Key at a checkpoint. Photos Andrews collection

Walking the

Flinders Ranges guide book editor Peter Beer on walking these

● AT TWO O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING 17 half-awake bushwalkers tumbled out of the bus to be greeted by absolute silence and uniform darkness. We watched rather wistfully as the bus continued on into the night bearing another 20 walkers a further 40 kilometres to Parachilna Gorge where they would commence their walk.

We had been dropped off on the main Hawker to Leigh Creek road close to Mernmerna sheep station after a 450 kilometre drive from Adelaide. Now we stumbled eastward for a few minutes, crossed a fence and collided with a long metre-high ridge which turned out to be the old narrow gauge railway line to Alice Springs. A nearby clear area devoid of prickles was chosen as the campsite for what remained of the night.

Dawn revealed that we were on a very flat plain interrupted to the east,

about five kilometres away, by a mountain range half obscured by cloud. We knew this to be the Elder Range, a long north-south outcrop of quartzite. This rock forms all the major ridges of the Flinders Ranges which stretch for 400 kilometres from Port Pirie in the south. The abrupt juxtaposition of plain and ridge is typical of the Flinders which are formed of Cambrian and pre-Cambrian rock.

Although the area had received over 100 millimetres of rain in the preceding week, heavy rainfall is not frequent. About 250 millimetres is the annual average for most of the region in the south with a gradual decrease to the north. The area is regarded as semi-arid with vegetation adapted to the climate. The river beds are lined with majestic river red gums, while the valleys typically are clothed in native pine, Mallee

eucalypts are often found on the slopes and desert plants such as several species of emu bush, native hops and wattles, abound. Fortunately, apart from a few areas in Wilpena Pound, the scrub is not dense and is normally a minor obstacle to progress.

At 8.30 am we set off across the plain, having used water we brought with us for breakfast, since water is not readily available on the plains. By 10 am we had begun climbing the Elder Range and were hoping to reach, by lunch time, the summit of Mt Aleck which is 1,100 metres high and about 800 metres above the plains. Mist still obscured the top of the range however, and increasingly thick scrub slowed us down so that we did not reach the ridge top until 12.30 at a point approximately 600 metres north of Mt Aleck.

Over lunch, which was eaten in the



Flinders

parched ranges.

shelter of the large boulders on the top of this range — making for very slow progress — we decided that with no view likely to reward our efforts, we would leave Mt Aleck till another time, and moved north down the ridge for another 200 metres to a major saddle. We were now below the cloud again and looked across the wide Moralana Valley to the western walls of Wilpena Pound which was our destination for the next day.

Following the heavy rains the valley was clothed in green which made a striking contrast to the red rock of the Pound walls and the Elder Range. The red colour of the rock faces is due to the oxidation of iron under the semi-arid conditions, and is one of the memorable features of the whole Flinders Ranges. Normally, clear blue skies complement the rock and vegetation to give a world

of brilliant colour.

Carefully we picked our way down the steep scree in the gully leading from the saddle until we reached a point at an altitude of about 650 metres where we moved left around a large waterfall and continued north-easterly to the valley below. An hour's walk from the foot of the Elder Range took us by way of a delightful gorge in the Red Range to the Mt Ide well, situated a few hundred metres south-east of Mt Ide itself. The well is one of the reliable watering points in drier seasons.

By now the party had covered nearly 16 kilometres and climbed 800 metres through slippery, thick scrub after only four hours' sleep, so we were looking for a campsite to rest our weary bones. Normally Black Gap, where there is a reliable spring, would be our destination, but after the heavy rain there was

good quality water in all major creeks, so we thankfully made camp on Moralana Creek, 1,500 metres north-east of Mt Ide.

Sitting by the clear running water I remembered an Easter trip many years ago when the only water found for the day was a small pool containing a few gallons that smelt of sulphur. A silver coin placed in this pool soon turned black, but after boiling, the water was used to prepare our evening meal.

As is common in the Flinders, the night was very cold, and this is frequently in contrast to the 30 to 40 degree temperatures that can be reached even in autumn and spring. Despite this, a much refreshed party was under way by 8.30 next morning, heading north-

Heyden Range from ABC Range, and inset, Aroona valley ruin. Overleaf, Aroona valley. Photos and map Beer





easterly towards the western wall of Wilpena Pound, cutting through the Bunbinyunna Range by a pleasant gorge one kilometre north of Black Gap. The next three kilometres took us through the native pines in a northerly direction to Leslie Creek, where we again headed north-east and began climbing steeply up the creek to the saddle immediately south of Pompey Pillar.

The weather had improved considerably and sunshine highlighted the magnificent views that we took in over lunch. To the west were the Lake Torrens plains with the vast extent of Lake Torrens itself picked out by the silver sheen of its salt crust. Closer we could now see the Elder Range in its full glory with the green carpet of the Moralan Valley below. From here the walls seemed unscalable, but we had already proved that it could be climbed by using our gully, or the one immediately to the south of the summit which, although steeper, has a shorter trip along the ridge to the top.

Immediately above us was Pompey Pillar, only 15 metres lower than the 1,200 metre St Marys Peak, the highest peak in the Flinders Ranges. To the east and the south the basin formed by the walls of the Pound could be seen, and among the native pines, mallees and red gums which dotted the floor, were several large clearings which had been made late in the last century in a futile

attempt to grow wheat. The old stone farmhouse still exists on Wilpena Creek.

Wilpena Pound is a closed synclinal basin 16 kilometres long by 6 kilometres wide, the quartzite dipping in everywhere towards the floor. It has steep cliffs and bluffs on the outer walls except at Edeowie Gorge on the north-west corner. The only drainage is via Wilpena Creek which cuts through the eastern wall to the site of the Wilpena motel and camping ground, established under the eastern bluffs.

Across the Pound to the east was St Marys Peak with, between us, the deep red gash of Edeowie Gorge. To the south-east were Point Bonney and Rawnsley Bluff, the highest points in the southern section. Between Rawnsley Bluff and Point Bonney is Moonarie Gap, a highly regarded area by South Australian rockclimbers. Moonarie Gap is reached by car from a road which turns off the main Hawker to Wilpena road to go to Arkaroo Rock, the site of Aboriginal cave paintings. There is a short walk from the road head to the rock face.

The inner man satisfied and our dewet tents dried in the sun, we all, except for a few rebels who decided to conserve their strength and go direct to the campsite, set off to climb the last 150 metres to the summit of Pompey Pillar. The view from the summit is magnificent, covering all the areas seen from

the saddle plus the wild grandeur of the cliff faces, gorges and valleys laid out at our feet. This peak, due to its isolation and lack of any track, is not visited as often as St Marys Peak, but has an equally rewarding view.

By 3.15 we were back at the saddle and headed downslope through moderate scrub which was recovering from the ravages of a major bushfire a few years ago. Our direction was north-east for two kilometres where we picked up the Edeowie Gorge foot track and followed it for a kilometre in an easterly direction to Coolinda Camp. The Pound is part of the Flinders Ranges National Park, and camping is controlled by the issuing of permits which can be obtained from the ranger at Wilpena or Park Headquarters at Oraparinna.

Coolinda Camp is set among trees beside one of the major creeks draining the Pound, and water can be found at most times during the winter. It is also at the junction of two major walking tracks which are part of the network established by the Adelaide Bushwalkers 20 years ago. Many people make the two-to-three-hour walk from Wilpena, make camp, and use it as a base for several interesting walks.

One track heads north-easterly to Tanderra Saddle and ultimately to St Marys Peak, a return trip of about four hours. A fascinating trip can be made to the hidden wonder of the Pound, namely

Edeowie Gorge. The track climbs up to a low saddle from Cooinda Camp, eventually reaching a side creek at about three kilometres from the start. A short distance down the creek brings the walker to the end of the marked track and into Edeowie Gorge. The Malloga Falls are upstream, but if you have time walk downstream through the gorge absorbing the magnificence of the cliffs which tower above you. Three kilometres of rough walking takes you to the first major waterfall, the 40 metre Glenora Falls. These bring you to a dead stop as the valley opens out.

This is as far as many people can go, but experienced walkers with a head for heights can bypass the fall by means of a narrow ledge leading off to the left of the fall and then down a steep slope to the base. Another kilometre further down are the equally spectacular Kanalla Falls, again bypassed on an even more exposed ledge to the left.

As darkness fell on our campsite, the beautiful clear moonlit night was shattered by the noise of an engine, then lights piercing the darkness: the first ever vehicle to this point. A National Parks Ranger sought our help to form a stretcher party to carry an injured walker down from Tandarra Saddle. We met the small tired group who had started the carry in the vicinity of Bannon Gap, and two hours later sat down to complete our interrupted meal.

Despite heavy pre-dawn rain, we set off at 8.30 to climb St Marys Peak by way of Tandarra Saddle, minus a few layabouts who took the easy way back to Wilpena via the centre of the Pound. We took an hour to climb the gently graded slope to Tandarra Saddle where we took a short breather before heading along the ridge to the peak.

The rock was damp in places and the slippery surface of a narrow exposed ledge became quite tricky. Once past this ledge, we headed steeply up large slabs to the windy summit. Alone on the summit we scanned the Pound again, then looked at the sinuous line of the Aroona Valley heading northwards to Parachilna Gorge 45 kilometres away. Through this valley the other party had been making their way for the last three days, camping at the Aroona Spring and Wilcolo Creek. This walk is relatively straightforward and level as it is bounded by the rugged red cliffs of the Heysen Range to the west and the equally high but more rounded ABC Range to the

Range between Parachilna Gorge and Brachina Gorge, and it is an area well worth several days of exploration. Permanent water is found at Aroona Spring, Brachina Gorge and, most times, at Bunyerroo Gorge.

Time passes quickly in the mountains, so regrettably we had to tear ourselves away to pick up our packs at Tandarra Saddle. We returned to the Wilpena camping ground by the track which follows the base of the eastern bluffs. The bus was a welcome sight and there was much discussion between the two parties of walkers on the seven-hour journey home.

Background. The Flinders Ranges offer a very different wilderness experience to the better watered eastern states. Its atmosphere is unique, with clear skies, wide vistas, rugged and colourful rock faces, great silences and a heightened appreciation of the value of water. Water is often a rare commodity and has to be carried considerable distances. Walking is best done from

May to October when there are lower temperatures and more water.

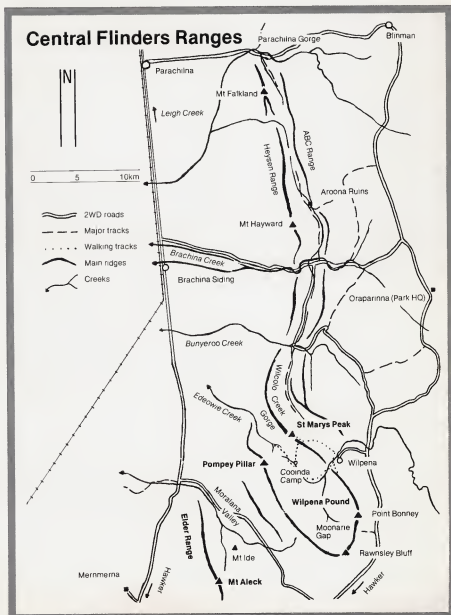
The Adelaide Bushwalkers have recently published a guide book called *Flinders Ranges Walks*, available at outdoor shops.

Maps. The Lands Department of South Australia publishes an excellent series of 1:50,000 topographic maps for all the walking areas in the Flinders Ranges. For the Wilpena area, the Wilpena and Morallana sheets are required, while the Oraparinna and Blinman sheets are needed for the Aroona Valley. Maps can be obtained from Mapland, 12-18 Industry House, Pirie Street, Adelaide.

Access. A bitumen road leads to Wilpena via Hawker which itself can be reached via Ororoo, Wilmington or Port Augusta. The bus company, Stateliner, operates two routes which are of use to the walker. Four buses a week run along the Hawker to Leigh Creek road which is three hours walk across the plains to the ranges, and two buses a week run to Wilpena Pound. ●

**Cliff faces,
gorges and valleys
laid out at your feet.**

east. Several fascinating gorges and cliff faces are found in the Heysen





Wild Cover Photo Contest Winners

The *Wild Cover Photo Contest* involved a marathon sitting behind a projector for the judges. With hundreds of entries from all over Australia, their job was not easy.

Perhaps predictably most slides were of bushwalking subjects but many could not qualify for judging as they were not in accordance with the Contest rules and instructions: vertical format and including people.

We thank all entrants for the excellent response to the Contest.

Kim Carrigan's photograph of Louise Shepherd climbing at Mt Arapiles, Victoria has won our first Cover Photo Contest and is reproduced on our cover. Kim, from Melbourne, Victoria, wins a J&H Snobag sleeping bag valued at \$320.

Eden Creek Falls which plummet through the lush rain forest of NSW's Toonumbar State Forest (left) were photographed by Roger Sheppard of Broadwater, NSW whose slide wins second place. Roger's prize is a Climax Outback pack valued at \$128.

Stuart McDougall of Vaucluse, NSW won third place with his dynamic photo of a vaulting canoeist on NSW's Nymboida River (below, left). Stuart wins a Mountain Designs Foxhole bivvy bag valued at \$107.

Specially commended is the dramatic abseil at Kanangra Walls, Kanangra—Boyd National Park, NSW (opposite) photographed by Andrew Aitken of Bellevue Hill, NSW.

We hope to be able to let *Wild* readers see more of these Contest entries in future issues.





SkiBases

Gripping and gliding with Philip Coleman.



● **SKI BASES ARE EXPECTED TO PERFORM** two functions. They must provide glide for maximum travel as well as grip for forward propulsion. When the skis are equally weighted the snow contact points for glide will be the tip and tail. The stiff mid section will barely come in contact with the snow. During a forward movement sequence you will compress or flatten out the middle camber of the ski. This middle section, which provides grip, will then contact the snow and allow forward movement.

Smooth waxed ski bases give the optimum performance. They can be fast and exhilarating. However waxing can be difficult in Australia because our snow temperature range hovers around zero degrees. While it is simple to wax for either wet or dry snow, considerable difficulty occurs in changing between wet and dry waxes. Waxless skis are generally not as fast as waxed skis, but they are much more predictable and generally grip well. For beginners a waxless ski is a sensible choice. You will find skiing easier and a lot more fun.

Modern waxless bases seldom perform well under all conditions and they have less glide than a correctly waxed ski. A glider wax applied to tip and tail regions of a waxless ski (that is, forward and behind the pattern) will improve glide. In some conditions waxless skis don't glide at all and snow clings tenaciously to the ski base. This 'balling' is often caused by small amounts of moisture being absorbed into the ski base and subsequently freezing.

Sealing the base with silicon spray will considerably reduce balling. In dry conditions, and if your ski ability is fairly good, snow can be dislodged by altering your skiing technique to give more glide and keep the ski in more continuous contact with the snow. The other common cause of balling is the accumulation of stray wax under the skis. Wiping the ski bases after use with a turpentine soaked rag will remove stray wax.

When buying or trying skis, consider that two identical pairs of skis will perform differently for different people. A light person may not be able to flatten the middle of the ski for grip, while a heavy person may find that the middle is always in contact with the snow and the resultant drag causes the ski to be slow. All the comments in this article refer to skis with similar camber.

In Australia waxing bases are not popular for recreational touring but are used mainly for racing and on some metal-edged skis. The development of fibreglass skis in the early 1970s saw waxless step bases being introduced in earnest. The durable fibreglass enabled the edges of the step patterns to remain sharp enough for grip and still provide reasonable glide. Their performance varied depending on the depth and density of the pattern and the length of the kicker section.

Seal skin has been used under skis

for many years. Prior to the 1930s, before mechanical tows were used, strips of seal skin were strapped to the ski base. For uphill travelling the hairs were stiff and all slanted in one direction so the ski would slide forward but not back. Synthetic mohair strips have now replaced seal skin. These mohair ski bases are often underrated, yet in a suitable ski base material allow a fast and quiet glide. When the mohair wears out, usually after no less than one season, it can be conveniently and cheaply replaced. Its major disadvantage of being prone to icing in transitory snow conditions around zero degrees can easily be overcome: a squirt of silicon water-repellant spray at the start of the day's skiing is all that is needed to prevent icing.

Several variations of the basic step pattern have now been developed as waxless bases. Some have been of the negative type, that is the pattern is cut into the ski base. These are generally fairly quick and not too noisy, but grip less readily. Positive bases are the other type. Because the patterns are raised they glide noisily and wear more rapidly. But they grip well.

Positive fish-scale patterns are commonplace now. In January 1978 the Trak ski company arranged an independent comparison test of their new fish-scale base skis. At the time the base was hailed as a great improvement over the existing step bases. The other significant development in the field was the super-crown base from Fischer which achieved fame when Bill Koch won a World Cup race on a crown base ski. There are now many variations of scales and crowns and several manufacturers have their own patented versions.

For several years waxless bases have been improved so that they perform better, and are less temperamental, in variable snow conditions. Considerable technological development has gone into bases and it has been felt that the day would come when waxless skis would perform as well as waxed skis. When the Finnish company Kuusisto introduced their Neverwax base about three years ago, many thought that the gap had closed. The PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene) compound insert base, which felt smooth to the touch, was tough, fast and quiet. Unfortunately it only gripped well under a limited range of snow conditions. Since then the Neverwax has been improved and the latest grey base grips quite well under most conditions. For the odd times it does not perform satisfactorily, wax can be applied without any detrimental effect.

The other radically new base development of recent years is mica. It is manufactured by mixing mica flakes (commonly known as fool's gold) in a special molecular weight polyethylene solution. After an electrostatic charge is applied to the solution the mica crystals

become aligned in one direction. The resulting suspension is allowed to set and is then bonded beneath a ski. Just like mohair, the mica lies flat during the glide phase and becomes raised to provide grip during the kick phase. However, because polyethylene is slightly porous it absorbs some moisture which often freezes, causing balling. As a result mica base skis are very slow. The balling and slowness problem, which can be reduced by application of silicon spray, was reduced further in 1981 when an insert mica base with a waxing tip and tail was introduced.

Metal-edge skis are a mixed blessing. If you are an ace skier who is able to use advanced ski techniques such as stem, telemark, or parallel turns, or if you are skiing on steep or icy terrain, then metal edges make skiing easier. They will provide 'bite' so the skis will not skate sideways. Because they are more rigid the tips will not vibrate so easily out of the direction of the turn. But when you are learning you will probably fall a lot and cross your skis, and your attractive new skis will soon have chunks missing from their tops. Metal edges may also cut your boots, clothing or even yourself. So if you are new to cross country skiing don't buy metal-edge skis.

Nobody knows what the future holds in waxless skis. But with the rapidly increasing world-wide popularity of cross country skiing, and the research being done by ski manufacturers, you can be sure that the best performance bases have yet to be invented. ●

Climbing in spring snow on the Paralyser, in the Mt Kosciuszko National Park, and below, ski bases: mica (top), mohair strips and metal edges, waxable base, Kuusisto Neverwax, waxable base with metal edges, fish scale. Photos Bill Bachman



● LIGHT RAIN FELL AS WE DROVE FROM the northern New South Wales town of Dorrigo through tall, lush forest to our starting point at the Platypus Flat Picnic Area on the Nymboida River. The drought, and consequent low river levels throughout NSW, had brought four Sydney canoeists 650 kilometres north to the upper Nymboida River in search of good white water. As the cars pulled up at the river we wasted little time in checking the water-level. Peter had canoed this section three years before and with relief assured us that we would have sufficient water for our trip.

The upper Nymboida, from the Blinks River junction to the Pollack Bridge near Nymboida township, is one of the classic white water touring trips of south-east Australia — a true wild river. We would spend the next few days in rugged and remote country which features thick, beautiful rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest, a deep, narrow valley and an incredible number of good rapids. It has the feel and unspoilt appearance of a wilderness area but it is not wilderness in the true sense due to the proximity of a maze of forestry tracks. It is a river for experienced canoeists rather than novices, and unless a deal of common sense is used in deciding which rapids are shootable, you run the risk of personal injury or of wrecking your kayak. A light, strong kayak built specifically for touring is essential.

After a long car shuffle we set off in the afternoon. At the end of the first pool the river channel narrowed and the four kayaks manoeuvred down a series of tight turns and closely spaced drops. The river was fast flowing and ominously dark under the overcast sky. Not having canoed for two years, I was feeling a little rusty at this early stage.

We then portaged a mean grade 3-4 where the entire river was forced down a narrow, sheer drop against and under a rock ledge. The base of the rapid was narrow and the stopper not clearing, so after some deliberation we portaged instead. Carrying full kayaks over extremely uneven rocky ground is no fun, but fortunately the portage was short. About a kilometre later a long pool came to a sudden end and we decided to check before shooting it. We discovered a six metre waterfall where narrow, snaking channels fell on to a maze of boulders. This was totally uncanoeable so we portaged again, only to find that another portage was required at the end of the next pool due to another uncanoeable block-up. We camped on a small gravel bank just below the tree line not long before dark. In just under three hours we had covered only three kilometres.

On the second day we began canoeing in a deep, tranquil pool surrounded by thick rainforest tangled with vines and interspersed with majestic hoop

pinies. This peaceful paddling was certainly a contrast to the strenuous portaging of the previous afternoon. We canoed a long section of grade 2 and 2-3 and pools before we came across another uncanoeable section. We named this the 'snake' rapid as Hans had stepped right over a coiled snake without even seeing it. The rapid was actually aptly named for it comprised a number of sheer, snaking channels dropping into a seething mass of boiling water which was blocked at the downstream end. It was a long, hard portage on the left-hand side taking at least 45 minutes.

The beautiful, still pool downstream was in stark contrast to the fury immediately upstream, but it ended in another jumble of rocks. By this stage there were grumbings about the number of portages and we were

A three metre sheer waterfall into a boiling mass of white water.

wondering whether there were any canoeable big rapids on the river. However, the first half of this rapid was canoed at the existing water-level; the second half had insufficient space for manoeuvring so was not canoed. We avoided a murderous portage over huge boulders and hollows by roping the kayaks down the rapid.

We stopped for lunch at the end of the next pool and remarked on the mood of peace and solitude found at these quiet pools. The afternoon brought some easy but enjoyable canoeing which was finally free of portages.

We camped at a place called the Cod Hole which has road access and is the starting point for rafting trips down the Nymboida. It is known to rafters as the 'Nymboida Hilton' as proclaimed by a makeshift wooden sign covered with signatures. We were annoyed to see toilet paper and other litter strewn about. It certainly lacked the beauty and charm of the previous night's camp.

The third day dawned sunny and warm and began with a number of great rapids that included a three metre sheer waterfall into a boiling mass of white water. This was absolutely exhilarating and probably the highlight of the trip. A number of clean drops and chutes followed, first by a small waterfall cascade and then by a lightning fast grade 4 chute where kayak and canoeist were briefly but totally buried in the stopper at the base of the rapid. This was some of the most exciting and satis-

Peter Blackwell at the brink of a Nymboida waterfall. All photos Crichton



The

White water canoe tour



Nymboida

at its best: by Tony Crichton.

flying canoeing I have ever experienced. At lunch we were astounded to observe a large number of interconnected staghorns forming a huge mat under a single tree.

The valley became wider and flatter for a number of kilometres and we made good time until suddenly we were plunged into another rugged rocky section. At a massive, rocky cascade extraordinary for its beauty we took a fast, bumpy chicken-run down the right-hand side.

The long, straight chute must surely give the fastest ride in NSW.

Almost immediately we enjoyed a very fast ride down a white maze of stoppers, foaming water and half covered rocks. The geology had now changed and spectacular cliffs of pink granite, partly discoloured black, rose from the dark downstream pools.

The alternation of pools and exciting drops had reappeared together with twisting rapids amongst granite boulders. This was excellent canoeing, but it was well into the afternoon of another short May day and we were aware of the dearth of campsites in the next block-up section. As darkness approached we had no choice but to camp on a steep, tiny gravel bank with tents only about six metres from the water's edge and one metre above river-level. What was worse, a dry gully led down the valley straight into our campsite, so thank God it didn't rain that night! We spent a pleasant evening around the campfire, the moonlit sky and roar of a nearby waterfall creating the timeless atmosphere of a wilderness trip.

The fourth day began with the inevitable pool, but some exciting drops soon followed. We were abruptly halted by the river's one real block-up gorge, with one granite boulder the size of a two-storey house. This was followed by the magnificent slippery-dip rapid where the long, straight chute must surely give the fastest ride of anything in NSW and has a stopper to match. We lunched at Kelly's Creek where it was so cold without wetsuits that we actually lit a fire to warm ourselves and prepare a hot drink for lunch.

The next section was continuous grade 2-3 and 3 rapids involving sharp turning between rounded, granite boulders. It led into a beautiful, narrow granite gorge with 50 metre high pink, stained walls rising sheer from a still, deep pool. This ended in a challenging set of tight rapids and good drops leading to the next pool beside which we camped on a sandy bank and soon had

tents up, dry clothes on and a good fire going. In just over three days we had dropped 140 metres and covered 19 kilometres. During this time the pockets of rainforest had gradually petered out and we had encountered many different types of rapids.

The next section of three kilometres, from the camp to the junction with the Little Nymboida River, included some of the most exciting canoeing of the entire trip. There were long continuous rapids which needed much manoeuvring, and a long grade 4-5 section where powerful strokes, quick recovery and prior planning of line down the rapid between boulders was required to avoid capsizing. We reached the Little Nymboida junction before lunch and had now canoeed 22 kilometres and dropped 170 metres. The canoeing had been at times exasperating, but also exciting and varied.

We still had 24 kilometres to go but covered this in only five hours because the rugged, narrow valley with its slow pools and big, sometimes uncanoeable drops had given way to a wide, flat valley with a fast-flowing current over numerous shingle races. This gave us plenty of time to recall the many good rapids, the still pools and the beautiful scenery which we had had to ourselves over the preceding days. By dusk we reached the high bridge near Nymboida township and a memorable trip was over.

The upper Nymboida is a great canoeing wilderness trip for those who appreciate remote natural areas, will put up with the portages and have a reasonable degree of skill in white water canoeing. The Nymboida certainly deserves its reputation, for it has a huge number of rapids, some of which are magnificent, and the valley is quite rugged in places with the portages requiring some stamina. You tend to get spoiled by a river like this and expect a similar standard of rapids on all subsequent trips. The Nymboida is also longer and more scenic than good white water sections on other fine rivers such as the Indi and Mitta. It was one of the most satisfying trips I have ever done.



Tony Burke flies down the chute on the slippery-dip rapid, 'surely... the fastest ride... in NSW', and right, Peter Blackwell (and map) surge down another good rapid.





FRANKLIN FLOODED!



Photo: Franklin River gorge, by Bob Brown TWS.

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Wombat

Marooned.
A brown
boulder-like
bulge
in the whiteness.

Head bowed
in hungry prayer,
razor claws
tear at sodden shoots.
Paws clutch
succulent treasure
from an icy tomb.

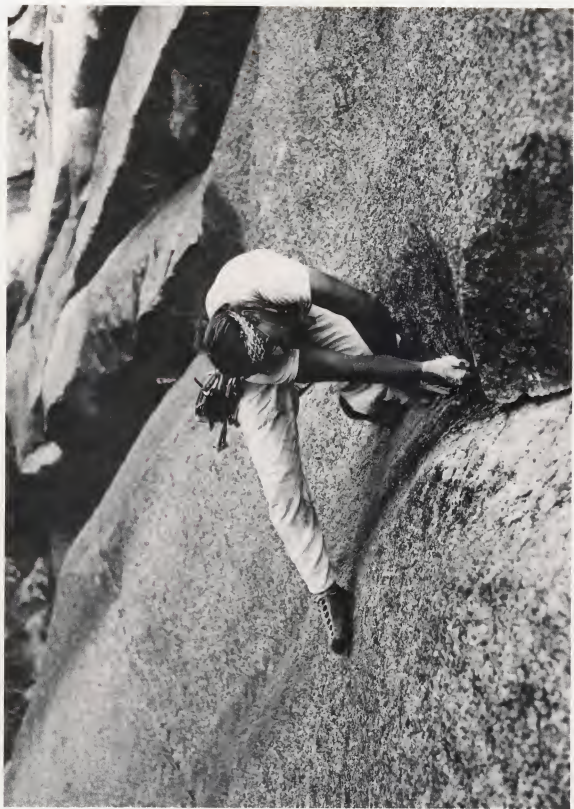
Muscles rasp
against frozen snow,
as the huge head
rises
snout extended warily
to sniff.

A camera
freezes
the image of a child,
grasping
rough-hewn fur.
To the delight of all
but this ancient stone.

As the child
escapes
from ice-edged wind,
powerful legs
raise a massive body
that lumbers on
alone.

David Yeoman

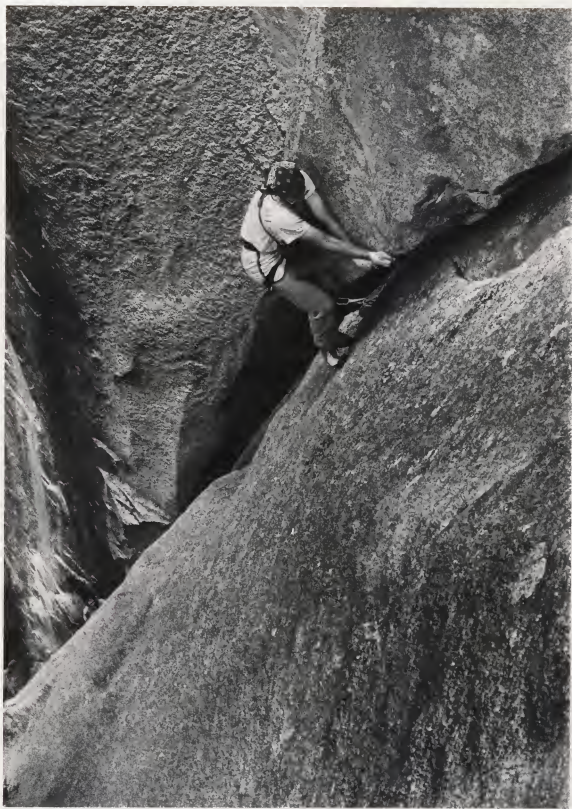




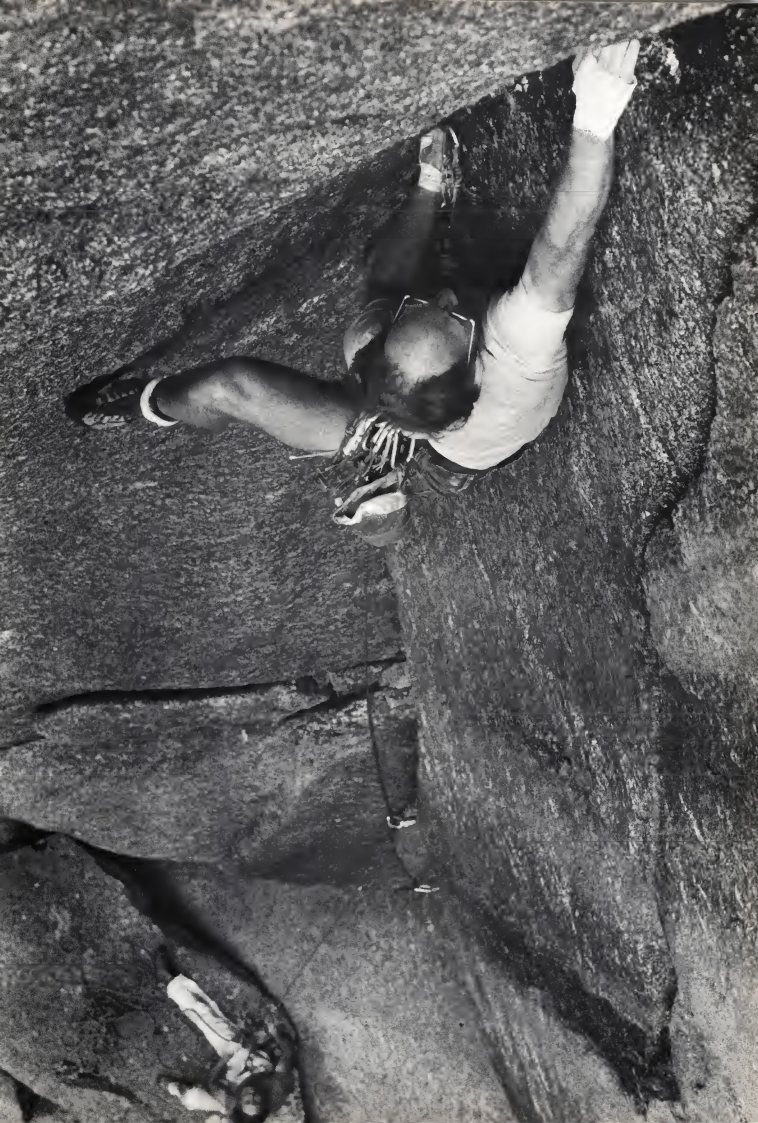
Glenn Tempest

Eddie Ozols on Hard Rain (grade 22) at Victoria's Mt Buffalo: one of Australia's finest granite rockclimbs. Opposite, Seamus Brennan and Steve McDonald on the South-west Ridge of Mt Aspiring, New Zealand.





Paul Brown on Caligula (18), and opposite, Beowulf (18), Mt Buffalo.



Sleeping Bags

● **WALLED DOWN SLEEPING BAGS** MADE IN Australia and New Zealand are examined in this survey. While sleeping bags with synthetic fills are cheaper and superior in very wet conditions, a high quality down bag which is very light and easily compressed will have more appeal to the walker, cross country skier and mountaineer.

Down. The value of a sleeping bag as an insulator depends on the surface area of, and volume occupied by its fill. Lofted duck or goose down, among the least dense substances known to man, is an excellent insulator. Down quality is assessed by measuring the loft or volume of a given weight of down. Nearly all bags surveyed are claimed to be filled with 550 loft down (550 cubic inches per ounce). Down quality varies between manufacturers and substantially between batches. Down is available in many grades. The term 'superdown' describes down of several grades. This is why the loft, and therefore warmth, of different 'superdown' bags of identical weight will vary greatly. Pure down is very expensive and most manufacturers use mixtures of different grades to reduce costs and minimize variation between batches.

An indication of a down's quality can be gained by feeling its texture through the fabric. Pure down has no quills or stalks and a smooth, almost indiscernible, texture. The Australian standard for 'superdown' is 95% down/5% feathers, but in practice this standard is not often achieved, many manufacturers working to a standard of about 85% down/15% feathers, sawdust, floor-sweepings and barbed wire

for 'superdown'. 'Pure' down is, for practical purposes, unobtainable. The best down usually includes a minimum of 5%-10% feathers. When buying a sleeping bag, loft is best examined visually. The higher the loft, the warmer the bag.

Construction. Down is contained in compartments or cells in order to prevent its movement and maintain an even layer of down and static air to insulate the sleeper. The inner and outer shells of a quilted bag are in contact at the stitching lines, thus creating bulging compartments. When compartments are formed by walls, the inner and outer shells remain separated and parallel, creating a constant, even cross section. Perpendicular walls form rectangular compartments, slanting walls form compartments with a parallelogram cross section, and zig-zag walls (V-tube) a cross section of overlapping triangles. These designs attempt to maintain an even distribution of down; effectively there is less difference between them than there is suggestion.

Quality of fill and construction are the buyer's most important criteria. Unfortunately it is impossible to thoroughly inspect a sleeping bag without taking it apart. Many manufacturers take short cuts by using scrap materials for wall baffles, while others use special materials appropriate for the purpose. Gaps in walls permit down to move away from pressure points, allowing warmth to escape, and are a common feature of medium and low priced bags. Gaps may be found at the end of the walls where they join seams, and near side baffles and zips.

Materials. The most popular material is 1.9 ounce per square yard nylon. Shells made from 1.5 ounce per square yard nylon are very light and supple but slightly less resistant to abrasion, tearing and leaking of feathers (as opposed to down). A limited amount of down leakage is to be expected

from any bag and is normal. A sleeping bag made from the heavier cloth is more rigid and resists down movement. The suppleness of a bag made from the lightweight fabric better allows it to drape over the occupant, reducing air gaps inside. The heavier fabric is better for the 'heavy-handed' or for very heavy use. Cotton's texture is preferred by some users, despite long-term problems with down and feather leakage.

Shape. The less air you have to keep warm inside the bag the better. A mummy bag of the same loft as a rectangular bag will be the warmer of the two. Some models are even tulip-shaped to further reduce the internal volume. This shape can uncomfortably reduce knee movement, and of course the more elaborate the design the more difficult it is to manufacture.

Because feet are particularly sensitive to the cold, being at the body's extremity, some bags incorporate a boxed foot with no stitched-through seams, surrounding the feet with cells of down.

Size. If you are at all tall or broad it is wise to test bags for size. Most shops will allow you to lie in a bag (with shoes removed of course) to see if it is sufficiently long and wide. Some models are noticeably narrow.

Zips are desirable for controlling the temperature inside the bag. They should open from both ends, ventilating the bag for greater comfort. While a coil zip is more reliable than a both zip, there is very little difference between heavy or light zips for sleeping bags. A rigid draught tube will prevent heat loss through the zip.

Stuff-sack. Surprisingly, stuff-sacks vary greatly. Some are too large to use in the pack, others are too small and make it difficult to get the sleeping bag into the sack, particularly when damp. Most stuff-sacks are made of lightweight materials that fray easily and quickly lose their water-

proofing. A toggle on the draw cord is an excellent addition that eliminates frustrating knots.

Foam Mats. Down readily compresses. The additional insulation of a foam mat is needed when sleeping on the ground and, particularly, snow.

Conclusion. A sleeping bag is one of the most important items you will use in the bush and mountains; an assurance of rest and a source of security and warmth in severe weather. A sleeping bag must suit your needs. Someone particularly sensitive to the cold will need a bag with more loft than someone with more tolerance who may find a three-season bag satisfactory in the depths of winter.

A sleeping bag is only an insulator that restricts the loss of body heat. The most elaborate and expensive sleeping bag will not revive someone whose core temperature is dropping. Someone suffering from hypothermia needs a warm drink (such as a glucose solution) and food, as well as a moderate external source of heat, such as someone sharing their sleeping bag. ●

John Chapman and Fritz Schraubmayer

● All sleeping bags are claimed by manufacturers to contain 550 grade (550 cubic inches per ounce) down. **Shape** Mummy 81 Mummy incorporating a box foot **Zip** S side zip SB full side and bottom zip **Material** C cotton N nylon Fabric weights in ounces per square yard **Features and Options** W perpendicular walls **SW** slant wall V V-tube B side block baffles **Dr** down collar **G** Gore-Tex outer shell **DI** different amounts of fill **XL** extra large sizes **NA** not available. Qualitative assessment: the more dots the better.

	kilograms	grams	Shape	Zip	Inner/Outer/Weight	Features	Options	Suggested Use	sack	Availability	Value	Price
Aurora												
10 Below	2.0	900	Tapered	SB	C/N1.9	W	XL	3 Season	••	••••	••	\$191
Australian Feather Mills												
Snowdon	1.43	560	Rectangular	SB	C/N1A	W,B	XL	3 Season	•••	•••	•••	\$160
Super Lightweight	1.30	600	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1A	W,B	XL	3 Season	•••	•••	•••	\$180
Super Snowdon	1.65	900	Rectangular	SB	N/N1A	W,B	XL	4 Season	•••	•••	•••	\$200
10 Down	1.73	1000	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1A	W,B	XL	4 Season Snow	•••	•••	•••	\$230
Climax (made by AFM)												
Diamantina	1.9	900	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1.9	SW,Dc	XL	4 Season Snow	•••	••	•••	\$250
Fairydown												
Kosciusko	2.0	1000	Tapered	SB	C/N1.9	V,B	None	4 Season	•	••••	••••	\$222
Everest	2.2	1100	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1.9	V,B	None	4 Season Snow	•	••••	••	\$299
Polar	2.5	1400	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1.9	V	None	4 Season Snow	•	••••	••	\$335
J&H												
Bushlite	1.36	700	Tapered	SB	N/N1.9	W	XL	4 Season	••••	••••	••••	\$198
Bushlite Super	1.51	850	Tapered	SB	N/N1.9	W	XL	4 Season	••••	••••	••••	\$225
Winterwarm	1.8	1000	Rectangular	SB	N/N1.9	W	XL	4 Season	••••	••••	••••	\$258
Snobag	1.85	1100	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1.9	SW,B	XL	4 Season Snow	••••	••••	••••	\$320
Kimptons												
Arctic 501	2.1	NA	Rectangular	None	C/C1A	W	None	3 Season	•	•••	••	\$183
Alpine 925	2.1	NA	Rectangular	SB	C/N1A	W	None	3 Season	•	•••	••	\$192
Mountain Designs												
Dedos	0.95	500	Mummy Bf	SB	N/N1.5	W,B	XL,G,1.9	3 Season	•••	••••	••••	\$193
Bifeda	1.4	600	Rectangular	SB	N/N1.5	W,B	1.9	3 Season	•••	•••	•••	\$207
Starhardt	1.2	700	Mummy Bf	SB	N/N1.5	W,B	XL,G,1.9	4 Season	•••	••••	•••	\$226
Egger	1.6	1000	Mummy Bf	SB	N/N1.5	SW,B	G,1.9	4 Season Snow	•••	••••	•••	\$292
Cerro Torre	1.8	1200	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1.5	SW,B,Dc	G,1.9	4 Season Snow	•••	••••	•••	\$340
Nordic Ski Products (made by AFM)												
Summer Light	1.35	650	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1.6, 1.9	W,B	XL,G,Df	4 Season	••••	•	••••	\$197
Winter Heat	1.55	850	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1.6, 1.9	W,B	XL,G,Df	4 Season	••••	•	•••	\$249
Paddy made												
Bimbiri	1.0	550	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1.5	W,B	None	3 Season	••••	••••	•••	\$210
Hohtam	1.6	700	Tapered Bf	SB	C/N1.9	W	XL	4 Season	••••	••••	•••	\$223
Melaleuca	1.55	800	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1.5	W,B	None	4 Season	••••	••••	•••	\$251
Bogong	1.6	900	Tapered	SB	N/N1.9	W,B	XL	4 Season Snow	••••	••••	•••	\$255
Snowford	2.0	1100	Mummy Bf	S	N/N1.9	SW,B	None	4 Season Snow	••••	••••	•••	\$308
Purax												
Polar	2.05	1000	Rectangular	SB	C/C1A	W	XL,1.9	4 Season	•••	•••	••	\$220
Torre												
Andino 7	1.2	700	Mummy Bf	None	N/N1.5	W	Df,1.9	4 Season	•••	••	•••	\$220
Neve 9	1.6	900	Rectangular	SB	N/N2.0	W	Df	4 Season Snow	•••	••	•••	\$240
Hielo 12	1.95	1200	Mummy Bf	S	N/N2.0	W,B	Df	4 Season Snow	•••	••	•••	\$290

TrackNotes

Powelltown Tramways and the Macdonnell Ranges

Walking through lush forest and the Red Centre with bushwalking author Sandra Bardwell.

Powelltown Tramways

● **THROUGH TALL MOUNTAIN FOREST** CLOTHING THE foothills of the Great Dividing Range east of Melbourne, an interesting network of walking tracks follows the formations of timber tramways, the means of transport used to carry logs to the main railway when the forest was worked between about 1900 and the late 1940s.

Linking several tramway formations, the main walking track connects the township of Powelltown and the settlement of Big Pats Creek.

Walkers will find a wealth of interest: the flora and fauna of the splendid mountain forest and fern gullies, and the engineering of the tramways. Some of the machinery, sections of the ingenious wooden trestle bridges, sleepers and rails are still in place.

Cleared and marked by the Forests Commission, the gently graded, well defined tracks provide easy walking.

Access. Powelltown is 84 km east of Melbourne via the Warburton Highway to Yarra Junction and from there the Noojee road. To reach Big Pats Creek, drive through Warburton and towards McMahon's Road for three km. Cross the Yarra River and turn right along Riverside Drive to Big Pats Creek. Continue towards that settlement for three km from Riverside Drive, to the picnic area between the stream named Big Pats Creek.

Facilities. There is a fully equipped picnic ground in Powelltown opposite the Forests Commission office. At Big Pats Creek and Starlings Gap there are fireplaces only. Camping is permitted; the vicinity of the Ada River offers the best sites.

Suitable Times. Summer and autumn. At other times, rain and mist are common and leeches too numerous for comfort.

Maps and Information. The Healesville 1:100,000 sheet (Division of National Mapping) covers the area and shows most of the tramway formations. A set of notes about the tramway walking tracks, published by the Forests Commission, is available from the Powelltown office or from the Publications Sales Office, 601 Bourke Street, Melbourne. *Tail Timber and Trammelines*, published by the Light Railway Research Society of Australia, PO Box 21, Surrey Hills 3127, describes the history of the tramways in the district and includes many rare photographs.

Warning. Do not cross or walk on the trestle bridges. They are unsafe and are not a quick alternative to the track. One of the main attractions is the tramway relics; please leave them for others to enjoy.

Powelltown to Big Pats Creek 34 km

The walk may be done as a through trip of two or three days starting from Powelltown or Big Pats Creek, or as a series of one-day walks. In either case, unless you retrace your steps, it will be necessary for transport to be available at the finish.

Powelltown to The Bump, 6.3 km. Set out from the picnic ground, walk along the main (Noojee) road, turn right into Blake Street, then into Surrey Road, beyond which a foot track takes you back to the Noojee road. Cross to Mackleys Creek Road and follow it for one km to a foot track on the right. This path climbs steadily but not steeply up the thickly timbered valley of the Little Yarra River, to The Bump, separating the Yarra and LaTrobe Rivers. Near the top, you will see the blocked entrance to the 315 metre long tunnel cut through the hill to improve the efficiency of the tramway.

The Bump to LaTrobe River crossing, 4.2 km. From The Bump, this section is downhill all the way to the junction of the LaTrobe and Big Creek. About one km beyond The Bump the track passes the site of the once-thriving settlement of Nayook West. Only the timber mill's sawdust heap remains as evidence of its existence. The track winds down through dense clumps of t-tree, crossing the river several times, to a car park by the Noojee road.

LaTrobe River to Dowsy's Spur Road, 4.6 km. The climb up the High Lead is the feature of this section. Most tramways were built along valleys or around hills with gradients which allowed small steam locomotives, horse or bullock teams to haul log-laden bogies. Big Creek is flanked to the north by a steep-sided ridge 415 metres high. The only means of bringing logs from the ridge top to the tramways leading to Powelltown was by a steam-winch cable to raise and lower the bogies. The 1.4 grade of the High Lead is not an ascent to be taken at the run. Dowsy's Spur Road is a short distance further on.

Dowsy's Spur Road to Ada River to Starlings Gap, 8.8 km. After the High Lead, the descent to the Ada River is a welcome relief. The remains of a substantial log bridge over the river and relics of the Ada No 2 mill on the northern bank, can be seen. The track rises a short distance to a junction; turn left to continue steadily up to Starlings Gap. A side trip to the New Ada mill site (2.8 km return from the junction) affords a memorable impression of the isolated lives of the early timber getters.

Starlings Gap to Big Pats Creek, 9.1 km. Cross Big Creek Road to the north-western side of the clearing where the track continues. It winds around the eastern flank of the valleys of Big Pats Creek

and its tributaries, dropping 525 metres from the Gap to the picnic area by Big Pats Creek. ●

Macdonnell Ranges

● **THE MACDONNELL RANGES** IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA, an intricate string of ranges and ridges, incised by deep channels and gorges, formed by broad, non-perennial streams, is a place where one can renew one's belief in the existence of wilderness. Here one rediscovered a fitting use for words, the meaning of which has been destroyed by abuse: rugged, magnificent, beautiful, vast.

The general elevation of the Ranges, extending in a roughly straight, east-west line, is about 550 metres. There are several peaks over 1,000 metres and the highest are Mts Zell (1,510 m), Sonder (1,350 m) and Giles (1,295 m), all in the section of the Ranges west of Alice Springs.

The mountains of the Macdonnells are uncompromising: gradients are steep where they are not sheer; long straight or gently curving ridges are more often sharply crested than they are broad backed.

In the absence of forest cover (although there is an abundance and diversity of plantlife), the rock structure of the Ranges is laid bare in all its colourful complexity. An adequate explanation of the geological history is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice to say that as a result of eons of geological processes, quartzite is now the most obvious component of the Ranges.

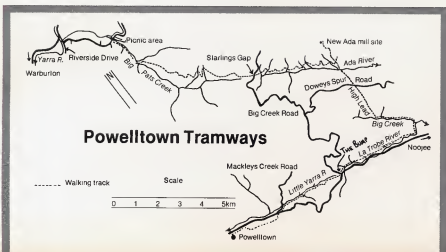
It would not be difficult to adequately describe the Ranges in terms of colour and time of the day alone. At dawn and very early morning deep purples, browns and greys predominate. For much of the day under the intense blue of the sky and the dazzling sunlight the rocks are bleached of their vivid hues. Towards sunset the famous reds and oranges gradually emerge, even more vividly than most photographs can convey.

Alice Springs, in the centre of the Ranges, is the only substantial settlement in a vast area, a fascinating place with the distinctive atmosphere of a frontier town. It is the base from which walkers can set out to explore the Macdonnells.

Trip Planning. During the walking season, from April to October (at the latest), the nights will be cool to very cold and the days mild to warm, with maxima up to 28°. The likelihood of prolonged, heavy rain is small. While winter is also the high tourist season in the Centre, it is most unlikely that walkers will feel crowded beyond the popular haunts.

From October to April it is too hot for comfortable, safe walking, except between dawn and about 9.30 am and from 5.00 pm to sunset. Shade temperatures of 40° and over occur frequently.

There are 22 parks and reserves in Central Australia, managed by the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory. Of these, the National Parks, and to a lesser extent the nature parks, are of greatest interest to walkers by virtue of their size and natural conditions. Elsewhere it seems that pastoralists do not object to responsible bushwalkers crossing the remote, sparsely grazed corners of their holdings. However, Aboriginal Reserves are closed to Europeans, unless an entry permit is obtained. In the Macdonnells these Reserves are located in the Jay Creek area (immediately west of Simpsons Gap National Park) and at the western extremity of the Ranges, near Haasts Bluff.





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As there are no permanent streams, the availability of water is decisive in planning walks in the Macdonnells. There are permanent waterholes and springs throughout the area but their locations are impossible to pinpoint in the absence of detailed maps (see below). You will have to rely on information obtained in correspondence or on the spot from Park Rangers. At the time of writing, Alice Springs did not have a bushwalking club.

Given this limitation, a first visit could well be planned around one- and two-day walks in different parts of the Ranges. This approach should enable you to get the feel of the country and to gather information for more ambitious walks — the urge to return is guaranteed to be compulsive.

While the main roads leading east and west from Alice Springs are usually suitable for conventional vehicles, heavy rain may suddenly render them negotiable by 4WD only. Minor roads and tracks, other than most park access roads, are suitable for 4WD only.

The walks described below are wholly or largely within reserves managed by the Conservation Commission. Write to the Commission at PO Box 1046, Alice Springs, NT 5750, for more information about these and the other reserves in the Centre.

Equipment. Even during the coolest months, water intake may be higher than in a temperate climate, as the air is very dry. A water container of minimum two litres capacity should be carried. If you have a warm sleeping bag, an elaborate tent is unnecessary; a fly to protect you from the dew will suffice.

In the absence of tracks, the going underfoot is almost invariably rough, so boots are essential for comfortable walking. They also protect the feet from the ubiquitous spinifex spines, gaiters may also be appreciated for this purpose. A hat, sunglasses and large quantities of film are the only other items of equipment requiring special mention.

Maps and a Book. Map coverage of the Macdonnell Ranges is unsatisfactory from a bushwalker's point of view.

The Alice Springs and Hermannsburg 1:250,000 sheets cover the Ranges and are useful for trip planning. Only the Alice Springs sheet has been published at the scale of 1:100,000.

Aerial photographs of specified areas may be obtainable from the Division of National Mapping, Unit 3, Cameron Offices, Belconnen, ACT 2616.

In addition, the Conservation Commission may be able to provide planimetric or contoured maps, or aerial photographs or mosaics of individual reserves.

The Macdonnell Ranges, by two Sydney bushwalkers Henry Gold and Frank Rigby (Rigby 1973), is a good all-round introduction for walkers. The superb photographs should whet the appetite of even the most blasé traveller.

Track Notes. A continuous traverse of the Macdonnell Ranges has been completed at least once (by CW Bonnython in 1976: 44 days, 530 km), but the logistics of that odyssey are probably beyond most walkers.

There are however opportunities for dozens of shorter walks, some quite easy, others definitely tough. The three described here are located in the eastern, central and western sections of the Ranges respectively and are quite different from each other, exemplifying the great diversity of landscapes encompassed by the Ranges.

Trephina Gorge Nature Park and Mt Benstead

The park is located 85 km east of Alice Springs and reached via the Ross River Road which branches from the Stuart Highway immediately south of Heavertree Gap, only the first 30 km are bitumen. Beyond there the surface varies from good gravel to treacherous mud (after rain). The access track from the signposted turnoff to Trephina Gorge is usually in good condition, though rocky in places. The crossing of Trephina Creek, a short distance from the picnic and camping areas, may be impassable after rain. At other times, the wide sandy bed should be negotiable by conventional vehicles.

Picnic tables, fireplaces, gas barbecues and toilets are provided for visitors; all water must be carried in.

The following walk of about 32 km return can be completed in a very long day. Alternatively, the Ranger may be consulted about suitable campsites for an overnight walk, or the route could be shortened.

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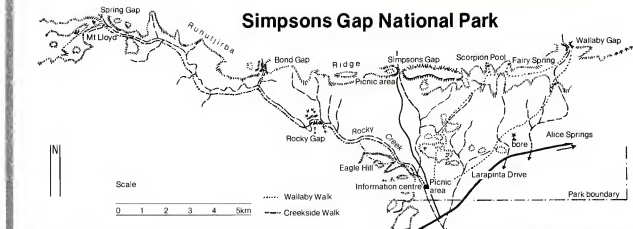
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Simpsons Gap National Park



ed by making Mt Hayes the objective.

There are no foot tracks along the route. Resist the temptation to follow cattle or brumby pads; they can easily lead you astray. Part of the walk is outside the nature park, through pastoral leasehold, so please respect private property.

The Alice Springs 1:250,000 sheet covers this walk.

Set out from the bush shelter at the most easterly picnic area and climb up the rocky spur rising immediately to the north-west of what I will call Trephina Ridge. Continue in a westerly to west-south-westerly direction, keeping to the northern edge of the ridge for the easiest going, for about four km, where the ridge comes to an abrupt, sheer-walled end.

The panoramic views from the ridge are breathtaking in their vastness, colour and infinite variety — the sensation is that of walking across an enormous, coloured aerial photograph. Mt Benstead (900 m+) beckons in the distance at the end of a long bumpy ridge to the south-west.

Walk around the cliff edge to a bouldery spur leading southwards and descend to the junction with an arête leading to the west. Continue westwards across a low bump on the ridge, then turn north, aiming for the red earth plains threaded with lines of red gums marking the watercourses.

Skirt the isolated hill, Mt Hayes, in the wide gap formed by tributaries of Trephina Creek and continue round the base of the steep, rock-strewn ridge which culminates in Mt Benstead. For a while it is easy walking across firm ground. After a few kilometres, the rocks and boulders reappear in the form of fantastic ochre-coloured tors and low spurs buttressing the ridge.

A gully immediately left of the fourth knob north-east of Mt Benstead provides an easy passage up to the ridge for the traverse to the summit. Keep to the southern side of the ridge around the first knob then follow the crest of the roller-coaster ridge. From a narrow sill, the final climb to the summit trig is up a broad slope. The magnificent views are ample into the blue distance and the seemingly limitless plains and jumbles of hills to the north and south.

Return along the ridge, keeping to the highest ground as far as practicable and drop down to the wide gap crossed earlier in the day. Rather than retrace your steps, head north-east across the plain and past the cliffs at the western end of Trephina Ridge. The route then plunges into a short ravine, the imposing red-orange cliffs of the ridge tower above. Beyond the ravine, in open country, continue skirting the ridge, making your way past broad fans of talus, across slender watercourses and past tall piles of boulders.

Swing from a north-easterly to a south-easterly course as you near the sandy ribbon of Trephina Creek and hold this direction to Trephina Gorge — a fitting finale to the walk. Though it is wide and its walls less lofty than other gorges in the Ranges, Trephina's brick-like rock formation, graceful eucalypts and sandy reaches have their own quiet charm. The camping area is less than 200 m away.

Simpsons Gap National Park

Simpsons Gap National Park, 20 minutes' drive from Alice Springs, is a spacious reserve of almost 32,000 ha, encompassing ridges, narrow gaps, rocky hill watercourses and open plains, and a cross-section of Macdonnell Ranges plantlife.

To reach the park, follow Larapinta Drive west for about 17 km to the signposted turnoff, park next to the Information Centre (blumen all the way). With full picnic facilities, the park is open daily from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm.

The Conservation Commission has devised two 'Nature Walks' in the park. These are better described as suggested walking routes, and are not nature walks in the style found in Victorian and NSW parks: fairly short, defined and marked tracks with several observation stops.

A well-illustrated, informative brochure has been produced for the walks, describing the plantlife and special features of the park's ecology. Most of the park was grazed for nearly a century until 1970. Although a few cattle still roam the area, the natural balance is slowly returning.

The walks need not be followed the full distances, being adaptable to individual capabilities. They are well suited to families with children (over eight years) who have done some bushwalking.

Remember to carry adequate drinking water. The quality of any water found in the park should not be trusted. The creeks flow only briefly after heavy rain.

The dominating feature of both walks is the rugged Runnitjiba Ridge, an impressive outlier of the Macdonnell Ranges, through which Roe Creek has carved Simpsons Gap. Very popular with packaged tourists, the Gap is definitely worth a look to contemplate the work of mere wind and water in its creation.

The Creekside Walk is the easier, more straightforward of the two. With the advice and permission of the Ranger, an overnight camp may be made at Spring Gap, the outward limit of the walk, 19.5 km from the start. For a day walk, Rocky Gap (14 km return) or Bond Gap (21 km return) provide worthwhile objectives.

From the Information Centre, walk generally westwards to the sandy bod of Roe Creek. Follow it north to the junction with Rocky Creek, and cross to continue along the latter creek. In general, the southern bank provides the easiest route. Upstream from Rocky Gap, diversions to the northern bank are desirable.

Rocky Gap (grid reference 657785 Alice Springs 1:100,000) is more of a short gorge than a true gap. It marks a change in the terrain, the banks upstream being strewn with boulders and the flanking low stone ridges confining the creek more closely. A small tributary creek cuts through Runnitjiba Ridge to form Bond Gap (GR 633805), guarded by a towering crag on the western side.

Spring Gap (GR 563828) is overshadowed by the ramparts of Mt Lloyd (1,068 m), well worth the climb if time permits.

On the return, a short diversion over Eagle Hill (GR 686769) enables you to gaze across the country traversed and much more, including a striking view of Simpsons Gap.

The Wallaby Walk (21 km return) calls for the use of map and compass. Following an elliptical route, it is not readily shortened, especially as the highlight, Wallaby Gap, is at the point furthestmost from the start. An anticlockwise route yields the most interesting walking during the second half of the journey.

From the steep slopes of Runnitjiba Ridge, supporting a cover of mulga and witchetty bush, the terrain seems to flatten out into a broad plain separating the Ridge from the Macdonnells, five km to the south. The appearance is deceptive: the walk

takes you through a landscape of subtle diversity: scattered rocky hillocks, innumerable sinuous stream courses, open grassland and patches of low scrub. The foothills of the Ridge are sharply undulating and littered with boulders.

The following grid references from the Alice Springs 1:100,000 sheet may be useful in conjunction with the accompanying sketch map: Wallaby Gap 770820; Fairy Spring 742813; Scorpion Pool 732812.

A rewarding extension of the walk is a climb on to Runnitjiba Ridge by the steep rocky spur leading north-west at approximately GR 720805. As well as the ever-fascinating sweep of the Macdonnells, Alice Springs is visible, a seemingly tiny isolated cluster of buildings.

Serpentine Gorge National Park

The most alluring features of the western Macdonnells are the gorges: the Hugh, Eltery, Serpentine, Ormiston, Glen Helen, carved by rivers and streams, none of which is perennial. As well as captivating us by their enthralling scenic qualities, these geological wonders should arouse in most bushwalkers the urge to explore beyond the ends of the tourist tracks.

Within the National Park of the same name, Serpentine Gorge has much more to offer than the initial impressive spectacle of a largish waterhole flanked by high crags, against a background of cliffs, a boulder-filled stream and the palm-like Cycads.

To reach the park, follow Larapinta and Namatjira Drives (blumen) for 100 km west from Alice Springs to the signposted access track, suitable for conventional vehicles.

Fireplaces and toilets are provided, but camping is not permitted. The nearest official campsite is in the very popular Ormiston Gorge and Pound National Park (28 km further west) where visitors can enjoy a solar-heated hot shower.

A full exploration of the Gorge requires two swims with pack, the first short, the second about 75 m long. Except in summer, the water is cold, so a jumper or thinsulate-type vest should be carried in a well waterproofed pack, together with drinking water. Up to five hours can easily be spent in the Gorge, the best photographs are taken an hour either side of noon.

Upstream from the first waterhole, the creek valley widens a little, though the 100 m high red-orange crags on either side still loom close overhead. The creek bed is crowded with boulders, slender red gums, ghost gums and occasional bright green Macdonnell Ranges Cycads, representatives of an ancient form of plantlife.

A few hundred metres beyond the waterhole, the cliffs close in, pinching the stream into a canyon of shadowy, sinuous reaches and sheer walls at least 35 m high and in places no more than 15 m apart. Despite the great exhilaration of the swim, the rocks at the northern end are most welcome, where one can hope for instant absorption of the sun's warmth.

Beyond the canyon, Serpentine Creek again becomes an attractive rocky stream, flanked by beetling bluffs. The Gorge soon comes to an abrupt end, beyond a small pool you can look out on to relatively flat, open plains. The creek, still flanked by rock walls, of almost insignificant height, winds away into the distance.

The only published map for the walk is the 1:250,000 Alice Springs sheet. ●



Reviews

Antarctic Australia by Jutta Hosel (Curry O'Neil, 1981, RRP \$19.95).

As Senior Photographer with the Antarctic Division of the Department of Science and Technology, Jutta Hosel made seven visits to Antarctica so is unusually well-equipped to write and illustrate *Antarctic Australia*. The Antarctic region remains largely unknown and isolated, a truly remote place that has only recently become accessible to the prying eyes of tourists by means of non-stop jet flights.

In the lengthy introduction Jutta Hosel gives a useful summary of the relatively well-known history of the heroic early exploration and discovery of Antarctica. Less familiar to many readers is the more recent and continuing exploration of the region, an era bridged by such 'greats' as Byrd, Mawson, Wilkins and Rymill with the formation in 1947 of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions. Australia's Antarctic Division continues the work of discovery into a whole new world of scientific exploration and research.

Antarctic Australia opens with a photograph of the Thala Dan making her way through heavy pack ice. This is followed by a spectacular panorama of icebergs and pack ice near Knox coast, an evening view off the coast of Wilkes Land and the mountains of Oates Land. The colour images are uniform in strength and of high quality: they are a highlight that give a unique insight into the vast, and still almost unknown, continent.

In general the photographs capture the serene and quiet nature of Antarctica. Apart from one strong picture of a barge surviving a hurricane force storm, there are few images that record or suggest the fierce and violent aspect of the land.

The poor quality of the paper and insecure binding detract from the book's general appearance, and some people might regret that no detailed map is in-

cluded, but these are comparatively minor details that should in no way deter people from enjoying as fine a collection of Antarctic photographs as has appeared for some time.

Dave Hamer

Above Me Only Sky: A Portrait of the Tasmanian Wilderness by Martin Hawes (Drinkwater, 1981, RRP \$24.95).

Martin Hawes is a bushwalker and wilderness photographer who has been closely associated with the Tasmanian Wilderness Society. He has now produced *Above Me Only Sky*, a coffee table book of Tasmania's South-west.

Any new book of this nature stands to be compared with the classics in the field — David Neilson's *South West Tasmania* and Max Angus' *The World of Olegas Truchanas*. The production of Hawes' book is better than those of these predecessors. The photographs are equally good and produced on quality paper.

Hawes is a promising photographer: he has given us an interesting range of images (those featured in the last issue of *Wild* are good examples), but a handful of photographs have a regrettable sameness. Although some pictures are sensitive and even spectacular, they do not have the breathtaking force that Truchanas, for example, was able to evoke.

The text of the book is a personal account of a number of trips in the South-west, sometimes to quite remote areas. The lack of suitable maps is an unfortunate omission. The text is readable and fairly lightweight. One chapter, *The Dying Land*, is devoted to destruction of the South-west and some of the photographs for it have been contributed by other well-known photographers.

Above Me Only Sky is an important addition to the photographic literature of the South-west. Overall it is a beautiful book with a conviction which we share — the South-west must be saved.

Brian Walters

Track by Sandra Bardwell (Algonia 1982, RRP \$3.95). **The Kooyoor Country by Road and Track** by Fred Halls (Algonia 1982, RRP \$3.95).

These two small paperbacks are an extension of the Algonia 'Road and Track' series which has already covered Bright and District and the Grampian Ranges. Both books are by experienced bushwalking writers and are packed with historical information, photographs and maps.

The Dandenongs are popular for day trips from Melbourne, and Dr Bardwell makes numerous suggestions for half day, day and extended walks.

The Kooyoor country is north-west of Bendigo in Victoria, and includes such towns as Wedderburn, Dunolly and Inglewood. The area had past glory as a gold-mining centre, and now has historical interest as well as natural features such as the Melville caves and the Kooyoor Range. In addition to tour suggestions for the less adventurous, there is a week-end walk suggestion to take in the best of this country.

These well-produced books would be ideal for use by families.

BW

Australia's Natural Heritage, edited by Geoffrey Hutton (Australian Conservation Foundation 1981, RRP \$37).

The Australian Conservation Foundation has more than maintained its reputation for high quality publications with the production of *Australia's Natural Heritage*. Beautifully, but not extravagantly, presented, the book is a brave attempt to produce an inventory of 'natural areas of significance to Australia'. It is printed and bound in Australia.

One of the features of such a task was that its achievement was dependent upon the work and enthusiasm of individual conservationists. The contributions of many dedicated people, both professional and amateur, provide the contents of the book.

The result is a remarkable catalogue of significant natural areas, selected perhaps because they are so remote

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that they have so far escaped progress and development, because they contain rare and extraordinary geological and ecological features, are the habitat of valuable ornithological and botanical species, are of anthropological and historical interest, or perhaps simply for their natural beauty. Areas covered range from Cape York Peninsula to the Australian Antarctic Territory, from Shark Bay to Norfolk Island. The maps (by Philip Stallwood) are excellent, and the photographs, both colour and black and white, of high quality. The enormous job of editing such a mass of diverse material was undertaken by Geoffrey Hutton, distinguished author and journalist, and Judith Wright has contributed the first article.

Australia's Natural Heritage will appeal to a wide spectrum of readers, among them the humble conservationists who just want to enjoy and preserve our heritage. It is a fine book. If you cannot afford to buy it, it's worth while trying to beg or borrow.

Chris Baxter

The Melbourne Walker 1982 edited by A. D. Budge (Melbourne Walking Club, RRP \$1.20). **Walk** 1982 edited by Geoff Law (Melbourne Bushwalkers, RRP \$1.60).

For years Melbourne walkers have been fortunate to have these familiar annual publications to give them information and inspiration. The current issues conform to a long established formula of trip reports, campfire humour and walk descriptions.

Of similar format, *Walk* has ninety two pages and *The Melbourne Walker* ninety six. *Walk* presumably justifies the higher price by the inclusion of a few colour photos. Each is an essential reference for those who intend to walk in Victoria. However, the epic 'Story of Inglewood' in *The Melbourne Walker* seems out of place in a bushwalking publication, and for sheer esotericism 'Beyond the Realm of Pluto' in *Walk* takes some beating.

These publications may not have changed much over the years but their value and appeal have delighted generations of walkers.

CB

Canoeing Guide to Victoria by the Victorian Canoe Association Touring Committee (VCA, 1981, RRP \$4.95).

This is the fourth edition of the *Canoeing Guide* and was compiled from information supplied by some of Victoria's most experienced and competent touring canoeists.

Descriptions, including paddling times, river gradings and walk-out routes of 39 rivers are given, as against 13 rivers in the previous edition.

Although primarily a guide to rivers, for the first time information is included

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The *Canoeing Guide* is comprehensive and will be invaluable to both beginners and experienced canoeists, and will also be of interest to bushwalkers, campers and fishermen.

The general source and direction of each river is given, which is interesting reading, and the most popular access and egress points are described. Difficult and/or notable rapids and inspection and portage routes are described in detail. This is very useful for groups paddling a river for the first time.

New information is given on some rivers — for instance the effect of the Dartmouth Dam on the Mitta Mitta River, parts of the Yarra River which have been cleared of willow trees, new access routes to parts of the Mitchell River.

This *Canoeing Guide* will fill a very real need as, in the words of Brian Dixon, Victorian Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, at the official launch of the *Guide*, 'Canoeing is fast becoming one of our most challenging and popular sports, and this comprehensive *Guide* provides important details of Victorian waterways'.

Yvonne McLaughlin

Climbers Guide to the NE Tablelands
by John Lattanzio and Greg Pritchard
(Published by the authors, 1981, RRP \$7.00).

The publication of this book is evidence that rockclimbing has come a long way in the New England region of New South Wales. Over 100 pages are devoted to descriptions of climbs put up, for the most part, since the mid 1970s.

Six photographs show what looks like fine climbing and there is a number of helpful climb location diagrams. While not a glamour production, the essential facts appear to be there and the binding is robust.

CB

Screamer magazine edited by Greg Pritchard (Published by the editor, 1981, RRP \$1.55).

The first 'public' issue of this new Australian rockclimbing magazine (formerly a club newsletter) was released in the middle of last year and has now been followed by a second (July-December 1981). The latest issue includes information about new climbs and a photo feature on Blue Mountains climbing.

Entering a field that has seen a number of publishing failures, *Screamer* and its enthusiastic editor have a difficult task ahead but could meet a specialized need.

CB

Flinders Ranges Walks edited by Peter Beer (Conservation Council of South

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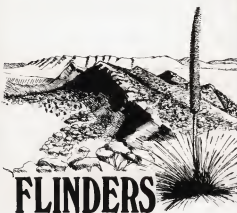
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Australia, 1981, RRP \$3.00).

The Flinders Ranges have a sense of age and mystery which seems to draw walkers back time and again. It can be a hazardous area, particularly in summer when water is very scarce. Until now there has not been a real walking guide to the area, and Adelaide bushwalker Peter Beer has filled the gap with this cheaply priced paperback.

The book has a section on safety in the bush and relevant National Parks



FLINDERS RANGES WALKS

regulations. The walks described are generally day walks, with some advice about preparing for the conditions of the region.

Production of the book is poor. The photographs are hazily reproduced and the cartoons contribute nothing but a sense of unprofessionalism. Helpful sketch maps are included, but it would be advisable to carry more comprehensive maps.

The book will be welcomed by those intending to walk in the area. Hopefully, future editions may appear in an improved format.

BW

The New Zealand Trampler's Handbook by Grant Hunter (AH & AW Reed, 1981, RRP \$NZ6.95).

New Zealanders call it tramping, Australians call it bushwalking, but Grant Hunter's thorough and well presented book is one of the best introductions to whatever you happen to call it that we've seen. It would be of considerable value to those who never intend to walk outside Australia, despite the fact that some of the information, and almost all the examples, are specifically for New Zealand.



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Written to instruct beginners, the book's approach is understandably conservative. There are detailed sections on trip planning, New Zealand weather, equipment, food, walking areas (New Zealand), conservation, first aid, survival and outdoor photography. As well as general information on bush skills, there is a good chapter on navigation and, particularly important in New Zealand, one on crossing rivers.

The photos and drawings are generally informative, but the photo of a 'tramper' carrying a rifle is an unfortunate inclusion in an otherwise sound publication. If you are an Australian walker planning to visit New Zealand this book, which includes appendices such as lists of further reading, clubs and maps, is almost essential reading, whatever your experience. Similarly, beginners in either country will find it contains the answers to many of their questions and the cures for some of their woes.

CB

New Zealand Alpine Journal 1981
edited by Rick McGregor (Published by the New Zealand Alpine Club, 1981, RRP \$11.50).

First impressions of this thirty-fourth volume of the NZAJ are of gloss, glitter and, more particularly, substance.

Articles are divided into two major categories, 'alpine' and 'rock' and they are generally short, impressionistic and in the modern 'pop' idiom. Australia is well represented. There are also the usual obituaries.

Relatively comprehensive and authoritative, the NZAJ is a unique source of reference on Australasian mountaineering. This issue is no exception but its unusually heavy weighting in favour of rockclimbing is unlikely to be appreciated by the majority of readers. Rockclimbing can lend itself to spectacular photography but, with the exception of a memorable colour photo, most of the rockclimbing photos are neither particularly sharp nor otherwise

distinguished. Unfortunately the same might be said of the mountaineering photos.

If this ambitious publication achieved nothing more than showing how far Australasian climbing has come in recent years it would be a worthwhile addition to our mountaineering literature.

CB

The Restless Land The Story of Tongariro National Park by the Tongariro National Park Board (Published by the authors, 1981).

The Tongariro National Park includes the spectacular volcanoes Mts Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro of New Zealand's North Island and is an area long renowned for its walking, skiing and climbing.

This glossy and informative little book contains colour photos, a fold-out 1:190,000 scale map and considerable practical and interesting information.

CB

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● **Pile Without Pilling.** That fibrepile (a nylon and polyester fabric) garments are here to stay for mountain and wilderness use few would dispute. Light, warm, quick drying and easily compressed, fibrepile makes smart as well as functional clothes. This last point is relevant to an 'outdoors market' which increasingly is becoming as conscious of its image as its comfort.

Macpac-Wilderness Equipment's new range of Warmlite pile clothing appears to be immune from the pilling (the fabric surface rubbing into small balls) problems normally associated with pile clothing. In a short test period we found no evidence of pilling. The manufacturers claim that they have tested the fabric for 11 months and 'can confidently claim it to be pill resistant, if not pill proof'.

We inspected the Warmlite pullover (RRP \$49.50) and jacket (RRP \$63.50). (Other garments made in Warmlite pile are pants and mitts.) This pile is certainly lighter than some others available, an advantage where weight is more important than warmth. However the fabric appears to be loosely woven, not as robust as heavier fibrepile and would probably tear easily if snagged.

Both garments impress for their generous cut, quality workmanship and attention to design detail. The jacket has a draught flap behind the zip, and forearms sensibly reinforced with light nylon. Both have knitted cuffs and waist, look good and are available in a choice of three colours: navy, grey or light tan.

The jacket is a conventional design but the pullover design, with its high zip collar, is relatively new to Australia.

● **Short Shorts.** American gear freaks have long enjoyed being able to acquire, through companies such as Early Winters and Patagonia Software, shorts made specially for 'backpacking'. Until



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Bushgear recently had shorts made for bushwalking, our walkers were not similarly blessed.

The new shorts, made to Bushgear's specifications by a specialist manufacturer, appear to be particularly strong and well designed. Made of heavy cotton, the stitching, zip and stud fastener all seem durable. They have a good system of double pockets, broad belt loops and are available in sizes for men and women. However, unlike some American makes, the women's models do not have a Velcro opening crutch 'for unscheduled trailside stops'.

At a RRP of \$26.50 they are not cheap but who ever said that being a leader in the fashion stakes is?

• **In the Bag.** Macpac-Wilderness Equipment's one-person Aurora bivvy bag with its fibreglass four-piece hoop to keep the fabric off your face fills a gap in the local market.

It has a nylon base and Gore-Tex upper, an insect screen and weighs just over half a kilogram. Access is a little awkward and there is not really room for a pack, but it appears to be well made. RRP \$138.

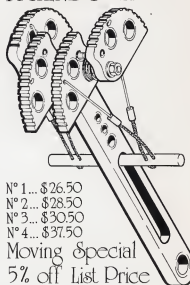
• **Straps.** A type of Edelrid crampon strap available in this country has been found to be subject to wear where it attaches to the crampon. The strap in question has an eye in one end through which the other end passes, forming a loop around the crampon attachment point. (These straps are not buckled or riveted to attach them to the crampon.) The problem seems to be that with the split strap system a small amount of abrasion, such as occurs during mixed climbing on rock and ice, will wear through the reduced cross section at the strap's eye and cause the strap to break.

• **Reviewed.** The Paddymade Warrigal pack reviewed in our previous issue retails for about \$75 (not \$40) and would, we feel, be improved by a flap to ensure that the closed cell foam pad does not ride up out of its sleeve when the pack is in vigorous use.

The Caribe Cordura gaiters referred to in the same issue have a Fastex buckle to keep the gaiter down on the boot, but under certain conditions this buckle releases itself. This does not appear to be an appropriate application for this buckle.

• **Staying Alive.** Early Warning fabric may not save your life in the bush but it could if you walk on roads or ride a bicycle. Outdoor Life is handling a range of bicycle panniers and small packs that are made of this 'miracle' fabric. It is claimed that a person wearing it is 300% more visible than one in normal clothing. It reflects light from headlights back to the driver, allowing a longer reaction time.

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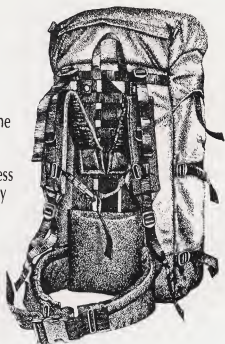
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Wildfire

Tasmanian Troubles

In his bushwalking guide, *South West Tasmania*, John Chapman suggests that the tower of Federation Peak 'can be climbed without a rope if confident but many will wish to use a safety rope'.

I feel that a walker and climber as experienced as Chapman could alter his description in future editions to a suggestion that all parties use a safety rope. This might take away any implication that only inexperienced, timid parties rope up.

The ascent is, after all, a rockclimb even if climbers tell us that it is only about grade five. It is quite clearly not a mere boulder problem and this is underlined by a recent tragic fall from the summit climb.

I'm sure that this approach could be extended to other areas in Tasmania and the mainland and I would like to think that the publishers of *Wild* could endorse these views.

Andrew MacLean
Ballarat, Vic

The cardinal rule that you 'pack out what you pack in' and 'leave only footprints' was widely ignored in Cradle Mountain National Park over Christmas.

Windy Ridge Hut looked like a tip with the wood box half full of freeze-dried food packets and other non-burnable junk...

Two bars of soap were found in separate pools at the top of Hartnett Falls, and fires, left burning despite the dry weather, had to be extinguished at Du Cane Hut and Echo Point.

Several points need stressing to many ignorant bushwalkers: 1. To all intents and purposes, metal foil does *not* burn and should be carried out. 2. Fires, if they must be lit at all, should never be left untended, even in damp areas. Better, carry a stove. 3. Washing should be done well away from lakes and streams if soap must be used. 4. Toilet paper should be burnt if it is safe to do so, or buried if it is not. Better still, adopt the American practice and carry it out. 5. Everything that is carried in, including spent matches and cigarette butts, should be carried out...

Peter Stroud
Mile End, SA

WILD

Thanks for a great magazine, full of interesting reading... It has been long in coming, but it has been worth it.

Helen Sikkens
Woodridge, Qld

Readers' letters are welcome. A selection of them will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Write today to the Editor Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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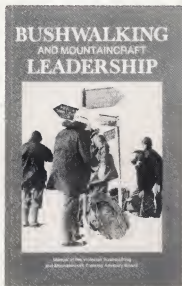
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suddenly "shift" throwing the climber off balance with perhaps unpleasant results. It is also desirable for a sac to have features incorporated in the back design to allow some air flow, and thus prevent excessive sweating, especially during strenuous use. Lastly, ability to adjust the back length is very important for many users. Because we consider these features to be so important, we manufacture neither external tubular frames with packs, nor rigid internal frames, as we do not believe that they measure up to our standards of comfort and stability.



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